

How Goes Bush's Freedom Push? **A SYMPOSIUM**

NATIONAL REVIEW

**HARD TRUTHS
ABOUT THE BIG EASY**

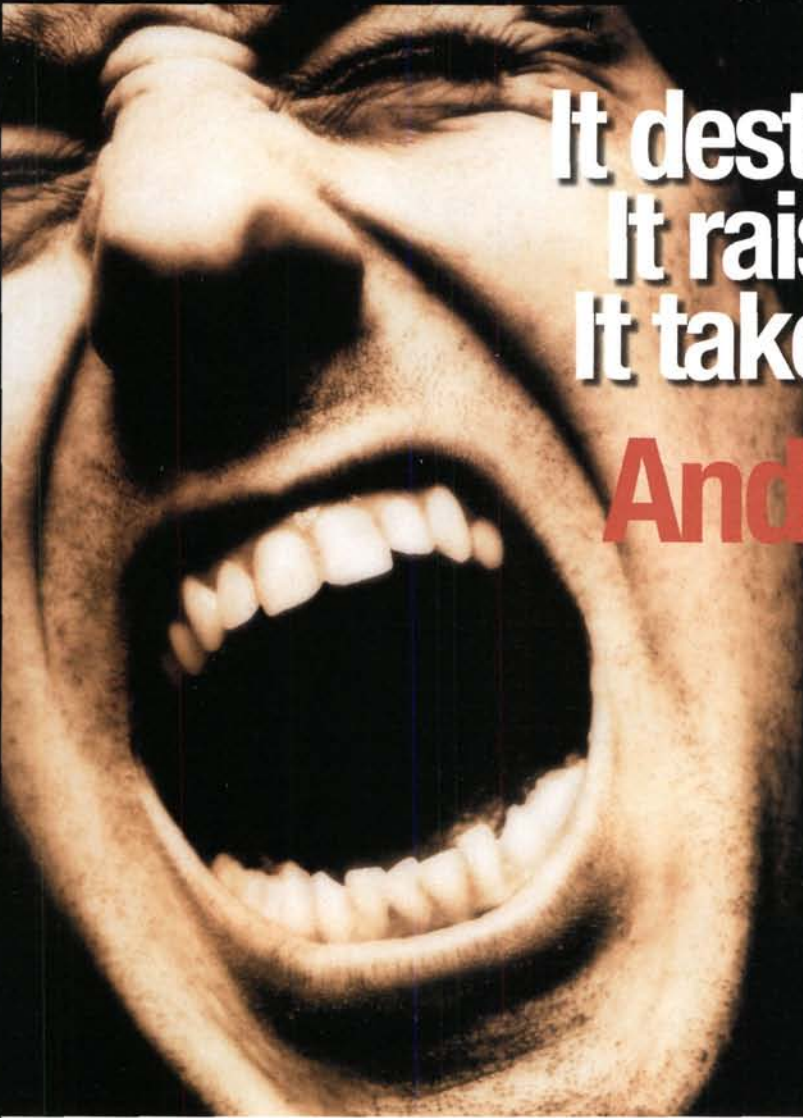
YOUR GOVERNMENT AT WORK

The politics,
people, and past
of New Orleans

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¹ A January 2005 Tillinghast Towers Perrin study estimated the cost of the U.S. tort system to be \$245 billion in 2003, or \$845 per person.

² Mississippi has recently made reforms to its legal system that, when fully implemented, may change its future ranking.

Paid for by the U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform, 1615 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20062-2000

■ COVER STORY

All the Uglier

Page 18

For years, many of us have noted and analyzed the phenomenon of Bush hatred—and all the unreason, hysteria, and meanness packed into it. But Hurricane Katrina seems to have taken the phenomenon to a new level. A natural disaster has been made all the uglier by the politics surrounding it. *By Jay Nordlinger*



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letters to the editor

OF BUREAUCRATS AND BEDSORES

Ramesh Ponnuru obviously does not want to let the facts get in the way of a good story; his article "Social Injustice" (August 29) begs for correction.

First, the Florida nursing-home bankruptcies were not caused by frivolous lawsuits or runaway verdicts. They resulted from changes in reimbursement in the Medicare and Medicaid systems, associated with Congress's passage of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which was a response to massive fraud and abuse by the nursing-home providers of the government-funded system. When Congress put the brakes on the industry's fraudulent practices, high-flying nursing-home chains could not service the massive debt they used to fuel their dramatic growth in the 1990s. Their problems were compounded by executives who looted their corporations for perks and compensation.

Second, caps on damages significantly infringe on the right to a trial by jury. If the pending medical-malpractice bill is adopted by Congress, the verdicts and judgments of local juries that hear evidence in particular cases will be overridden by the dictates of deskbound Washington bureaucrats, who have never heard the facts of any specific case. The bill has rightly been characterized as "affirmative action for wrongdoers," since the perpetrators of wrongful acts will no longer have to be fully accountable.

Third, pressure sores are not the inevitable consequence of old age or ill health. And, unlike Ponnuru's claim, they are not "hard to avoid" when proper care is given.

Finally, considering the revelations from the Vioxx scandal, do we really think that FDA approval should immunize drug manufacturers against liability for punitive damages? The testimony of FDA employees suggests that the agency is much more interested in protecting the profits of drug companies than the health of the people who consume their products.

Ponnuru is right to decry any form of bearing false witness. He needs to be careful, however, to avoid the very conduct he criticizes.

Ken Connor
Washington, D.C.

RAMESH PONNURU REPLIES: Several factors contributed to the nursing-home bankruptcies in Florida. The state's trial-lawyer-friendly laws were one of them—as the legislature clearly believed when it changed them. Connor does not even begin to demonstrate otherwise.

The bill's damage cap is set by federal legislators, not bureaucrats, and state legislators can opt out of them. The right to a jury trial does not allow juries to disregard the law.

Does Connor really want to argue that Christopher Reeve had substandard care? Many bedsores can be avoided, but even the

best nursing homes will have some—and they are not proof of misconduct.

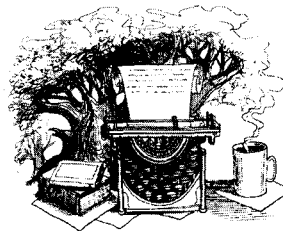
This is not the place to debate the conventional journalistic/trial-lawyer wisdom on Vioxx. But the FDA harms more people by keeping products off the market than by letting them be sold.

Finally, my comment about "bearing false witness" had to do with the use of the courts falsely to accuse people and firms of causing injuries and deaths. I have not accused Connor of anything other than being wrongheaded—a charge that his ill-tempered letter amply corroborates.

WIT, HUMOR, WEEDS

Richard Brookhiser's column "Upstate Burgeoning" (August 29) is a sheer delight: vegetables and weeds and Frost and Whitman frolicking together on one neat page, a flowing fountain of good wit and good humor. It made my morning—actually, more than one morning, since I'll clip it out and reread it, now and then.

Mary Wolan
Jacksonville Beach, Fla.





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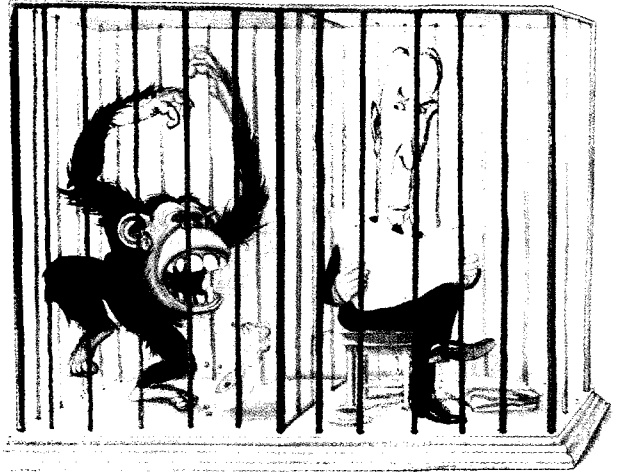
THE WEEK

■ For years, we said they blamed Bush for everything but the weather. Better rethink that.

■ As one watches armed gangs rape and pillage their way through New Orleans, it is easy to think like Hobbes: Sever the cords of law and order, and man's savagery will be unleashed at its ugliest. There is truth in that view—but not quite the whole truth. For one could also look to Chalmette, a New Orleans suburb whose residents not only restrained themselves from looting, but helped deliver food by boat to people trapped in their homes. One could look elsewhere in Louisiana, and Mississippi, as well. Why some men act like beasts when others act like men is a question whose answer may tell us less about mankind than about New Orleans: about race, about poverty, about resentment, about the use of self-pity to justify violence. That we would like to ignore these things makes it all the more important that we refuse to do so.

■ “Journalism seems to have recovered its reason for being,” was how *Washington Post* media critic Howard Kurtz began an article celebrating the “activist stance” of emotional reporters covering Katrina's devastation. Kurtz must have been especially pleased with the “reporting” of his other employer, CNN. Gone was any pretense of objectivity. CNN's reporters competed with one another to be the Most Outraged Journalist of the Week. Anchorwoman Kyra Phillips repeatedly demanded an admission of federal dereliction of duty, while Anderson Cooper castigated Sen. Mary Landrieu for not appearing as angry as he was. And journalism's “reason for being” was clearly to hold George W. Bush personally responsible for everything from the obvious responsibilities of state and local officials to global warming and gasoline prices. An exceptionally evenhanded *Newsweek* article about the hurricane and its aftermath addressed what many in the media have so delicately avoided about New Orleans: “It has long been known better for corruption than efficiency.” We saw the media corrupted when the levees broke and unleashed the inner Frank Rich or Maureen Dowd of all those reporters.

■ Peddlers of racial grievance act like hyenas. They prowl in packs, encircle their prey, and make a great deal of hideous noise. Their latest victims are two news services. An Associated Press photographer snapped a black man wading through New Orleans's floodwaters with a bag of goods after—according to the caption—“looting a grocery store.” A photographer for Getty Images captured two white people “after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store.” The difference in description—“looting” vs. “finding”—was taken as proof positive of racism. Consider, though, that it is the AP's policy to describe as a looter anyone, of any color,



Just another primate? (See page 10.)

seen entering an abandoned store and emerging with goods. That is precisely what the AP photographer witnessed. Consider also that Getty's photographer had reason to believe, based on what he saw, that the white people were skimming goods from the water's surface after they floated off of store shelves. These details matter—but we scarcely notice them, so distracted are we by all the barking.

■ One of the many lessons of Hurricane Katrina is that great leaders aren't always on the scene when they're most needed: Nobody is mistaking New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin for Rudy Giuliani. Yet in the region struck by the storm, Mississippi governor Haley Barbour has emerged as the most Giuliani-like political figure, striking an appropriate balance between compassion and toughness as he speaks candidly about the magnitude of the disaster, delivers harsh warnings to looters, and pays off-camera visits to victims. Refreshingly, he has also refused to blame Washington for his state's problems. When a reporter encouraged him to unleash on the Bush administration, Barbour would have none of it: “Is this an argument or an interview?” In some people, the hurricane brought out the worst. In Barbour, it has brought out the best.

■ With only the flimsiest of conditionals, Pat Robertson called for the murder of Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chávez. “If he thinks we're trying to assassinate him, I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it. It's a whole lot cheaper than starting a war.” Donald Rumsfeld complained, as did the dictator. At least we know there is no intelligent design to the 700 Club.

■ The base-closing commission voted 8 to 1 to keep Ellsworth open, thereby avoiding collateral damage to South

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THE WEEK...

Dakota senator John Thune. He had promised to use his ties to the Bush administration to spare the state's second-largest employer. The near-unanimous decision reflects the commission's belief that national security would not be enhanced by consolidating B-1 bombers at a single Texas base. As for us, we think South Dakota *really* contributed to national security when they elected Thune to replace Tom Daschle.

■ Justice Scalia, in a California speech: "Now the Senate is looking for moderate judges, mainstream judges. What in the world is a moderate interpretation of a constitutional text? Halfway between what it says and what we'd like it to say?" Teach, Scalia, teach.

■ Trial lawyers love drug companies: With deep pockets, poor reputations, and a customer base composed largely of people who are already sick and dying, they make the perfect targets for big-money lawsuits. A jury in Texas has awarded approximately \$253 million—reduced to around \$26 million by a Texas law capping punitive damages—to a widow whose 59-year-old husband died of heart failure after taking the painkiller Vioxx. The only problem with this curious judgment is that medical experts were completely unable to determine that Vioxx caused the man's heart to fail. In fact, 70 percent of his vital arteries were already clogged long before he ever started taking the drug, which had already passed through the rigorous FDA approval process. By scaring investors out of the pharmaceutical sector and bankrupting the companies that fund cutting-edge medical research, such lawsuits inflict staggering damage on society. They deal a one-two punch to needy patients: They deny access to many treatments that have already been developed, and they prevent the future development of drugs that might become available in a friendlier investment environment. Will no one hold trial lawyers liable for this catastrophic harm?

■ Five members of "Able Danger," a Defense Department intelligence program, have said that Mohamed Atta was identified as a potential terrorist long before the 9/11 attacks. The Pentagon has found no documentary corroboration that this is so, although its spokesman recently conceded—conveniently—that corroborating documents may have been destroyed. Why might we have lost Atta? Prior to 9/11, the Defense Department strictly interpreted regulations forbidding the collection even of open-source material on "U.S. persons," a bizarre term whose precise definition includes, among others, legal aliens—and, by extension, covert terrorists here on student visas. It is entirely possible, then, that intelligence on Atta was destroyed not because it was judged irrelevant to national security, but simply because it had been collected in the first place. One would have expected the 9/11 commission to be interested in that possibility; instead, its final report failed even to mention the information it had been given about an Atta identification. The Senate Judiciary Committee is planning to hold hearings. May it improve on the commission.

■ As though we needed another reminder that terrorists are not just overseas, the Justice Department has indicted four men in Los Angeles for conspiring to wage war against the United States. Their conspiracy is said to have included plans for political assassinations as well as bombings of American military installations and targets associated with Israel. If true, those charges should heighten concern for the radicalization of the U.S. prison population. It is alleged that the organization supposedly behind the plot, Jam'iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh, was formed in a California state prison and recruited inside and outside the jail. Sociopaths, eager to rationalize their crimes as jihad against an infidel regime, make a seamless transition to militant Islam. Our focus must be on preventing their attacks rather than prosecuting them after the slaughter, and the recent Los Angeles indictments are a noteworthy success in that effort.

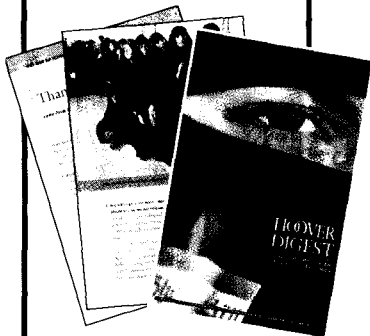
■ Texas police said they stopped Al Sharpton's car as it was going 110 mph, trying to catch a plane after a meeting with Cindy Sheehan in Crawford. Sharpton denied his driver had been going that fast, and said the accusation smacked of "Texas politics." But Chief Deputy Charles Sullins said he had never heard of Sharpton. "Maybe I've just been out here in the country too long." A place where Al Sharpton is unknown: Can (we) New Yorkers move there?

■ The draft Iraqi constitution is going to a referendum on October 15. Given the circumstances, it is a remarkably fair and thoughtful document, recognizing the role of Islam in Iraq but not instituting a theocracy; creating a federal system that acknowledges the ethnic and religious divides in the country without pulling it apart; distributing revenue from already-discovered oil fields nationwide by population rather than preserving it for the Shiite and Kurdish areas that harbor these fields. The Sunnis, who benefited from a centralized state under Saddam, are balking because they worry that the federalism provisions go too far (if three provinces reject the constitution it fails, and unified Sunni opposition would mean at least two provinces would be against). U.S. ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad is pushing the Shiites and Kurds to make further concessions to the Sunnis, since it is in our interest that there be national unity around the constitution, perhaps bleaching the insurgency of some of its strength. What is clear is that, for the time being, the draft constitution and its acceptance or rejection will be a matter of negotiations and votes, a departure for Iraq and for the Arab world.

■ A particularly heartbreaking photographic sequence shows a huge mound of shoes on a bridge over the Tigris in Baghdad, and people picking over them as they search for missing relatives. Atrocity overwhelmed a peaceful pilgrimage of hundreds of thousands of Shiites on their way to the Kadhimiya mosque, a shrine that goes back centuries. Panic started when terrorists fired mortars and rockets close to the shrine. When the rumor spread that a Sunni suicide bomber was in the crowd all began to run for their lives. Many, and especially women and children, were trampled underfoot, and some were drowned when protective railings on the bridge collapsed. More than 950 dead and many hundreds

Repeal the Bush Tax Increase

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President Bush has appointed a commission to study tax reform and said that he wants to make his tax cuts permanent. However, no major tax reform will occur soon. One modest proposal for immediate reform is to make permanent a Bush tax cut that has been allowed to expire.

I am referring to the bonus depreciation provisions that expired on January 1, 2005, raising taxes for all businesses. Unfortunately, there were no headlines noting this tax increase, possibly because bonus depreciation is an issue that excites only tax economists and accountants. It is important to all, however, because bonus depreciation increases economic growth by encouraging firms to invest.

Under ordinary depreciation, every business, even a corner mom-and-pop grocery, deducts the cost of each investment over its lifetime. For example, if a business buys a \$1 million machine that lasts for ten years, it garners a \$100,000 tax deduction each year for ten years. Under bonus depreciation, in contrast, it receives a \$500,000 "bonus" deduction at the time of purchase and takes a \$50,000 deduction each year for ten years. The total tax deductions are equal, but bonus depreciation moves half the deductions to the time of purchase, a valuable change because a dollar today is better than a dollar next year or later. For a business in the 35 percent tax bracket that can borrow at 6 percent, currently the prime rate, bonus depreciation increases the after-tax value of these deductions from \$273,059 to \$311,530, an increase of more than \$38,000. The value is greater for

firms that pay higher interest rates and for those constrained by a lack of cash.

To put this in perspective, consider expensing, where the entire purchase price is immediately deducted. With expensing, the government essentially becomes a partner. For example, if a firm is in the 35 percent bracket, the government pays 35 percent of the purchase price through expensing and receives 35 percent of future earnings in taxes, essentially relieving the business of all taxes on the income from its 65 percent. Furthermore, if all investments were expensed and deducted from income, then the tax system would become a consumption tax because consumption equals income minus investment. Therefore, the bonus depreciation provision in force in 2004 cut the tax rate on income from qualifying investments by half and brought the tax code closer to a consumption tax.

Bonus depreciation was enacted in 2003 to help the economy recover from the recession. Many economists have correctly questioned this rationale. The long-run effectiveness of bonus depreciation, and the similar investment tax credit first enacted by the Kennedy-Johnson administration, however, is unquestioned. My work shows that these measures stimulate the economy more per dollar of lost revenue than other kinds of tax cuts and that the benefits are shared by both business and labor because the new investments increase worker productivity and wages.

Bonus depreciation is a simple tax cut, benefits economic growth, and has historically had bipartisan support. Let's bring it back now.

—Kenneth L. Judd

Kenneth L. Judd is the Paul H. Bauer Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution.

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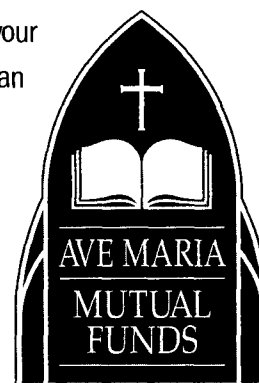
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THE WEEK...

injured—such is the grim toll for that morning, far and away the deadliest since the invasion in March 2003. And still the political process around the constitution continues, and there is no civil war. Hope for the future remains stronger than the inhuman cruelties of the present.

■ To have a pen, said Voltaire, is to have war, and Orhan Pamuk is learning this truth. He is Turkey's most famous writer, author of prize-winning novels. Published last year, his novel *Snow* attacks Islamism, and he has said that fundamentalists like Osama bin Laden are "a danger to the world." But in an interview with a Swiss paper he pointed out that Turks have killed a million Armenians and 30,000 Kurds, "and nobody but me dares to talk about it." The response has been to charge him with "insulting the country's national character," for which he faces a prison sentence of three years. And here's a fine irony—in another interview he pauses to swipe at Oriana Fallaci, the renowned Italian journalist who argues with her usual verve that Islamism is turning Europe into Eurabia, a continent in its own image. According to Pamuk, this is a "fanciful construct," but it has been enough for an Italian judge to indict her for *vilipendio*, or vilification, of a religion admitted by the state. This carries a two-year sentence. Different perspectives, same legal jackboot. It was that way when they put Voltaire inside for speaking out.

■ Every time China's Communist dictatorship gets a new public face, he is toasted as the great moderate hope. That hope is inevitably betrayed. Deng Xiaoping liberalized China's economy only to crush students with tanks at Tiananmen. Jiang Zemin was a more boring version of the same: He understood the value of markets, but cared not the least for freedom of thought and expression. And now we have Hu Jintao, under whom China has issued dark threats to Taiwan while cracking down on Internet speech, on Christians, on journalists. It is worth pausing, when we can, to mention the names of victims. In that vein, consider Zhao Yan, a Chinese *New York Times* researcher who was jailed eleven months ago for leaking the "state secret" that Jiang

Zemin had rejected Hu Jintao's recommendation of a Chinese general for promotion. For this "crime," Zhao is held incommunicado, having been denied a court hearing, visitation rights, and medical care. One would like to be optimistic about his chances, but history counsels otherwise.

■ It would be a drab world of bourgeois conformity if there were not some colorful absolute monarch somewhere flaunting an extravagant lifestyle and exercising *droit du seigneur* over his female subjects. In the case of King Mswati III of Swaziland, resistance to his exercising of that particular right seems to be . . . less than implacable. At this year's ritual Reed Dance, 50,000 topless teenage virgins pranced and twirled before His Majesty (and his mother, whose formal title is Great She-Elephant), indicating by song and gesture their willingness to become King Mswati's 13th queen. Preparations for this year's ceremony included the lifting of a ban the king imposed in 2001, prohibiting sexual intercourse with girls less than 18 years old. The point of the ban was to make a dent in Swaziland's appalling statistics on HIV/AIDS; the disease currently afflicts 29 percent of Swazis aged 15 to 19. The ban's force, however, had been vitiated somewhat by the king's taking a 17-year-old bride just days after announcing it, a transgression for which he fined himself one cow. The general joy at the lifting of the ban was marred slightly by one of the king's daughters, also aged 17, who got disgracefully drunk at a party to celebrate the event. She had to be spanked by the king's chamberlain.

■ There may be a handful of our readers who are unfamiliar with the name and career of Mr. Kanye West. Mr. West is a rap singer from Chicago, whose past extracurricular activities have concentrated on propagandizing for the view that AIDS was created by the U.S. government as part of a program to exterminate black people. Well, Mr. West managed to get himself in the news twice toward the end of August. On the 27th he hosted a party at the very exclusive Shore Club hotel in Miami, Fla. One of the guests was another rap figure no doubt well known to NATIONAL REVIEW readers, Mr. Suge Knight. Unfortunately, while the partygoers were jitterbugging to the Pussycat Dolls' version of *Don't Cha*, an unidentified person walked up to Mr. Knight and shot him in the leg. Police are investigating. Six days later, at a telethon concert to aid victims of Hurricane Katrina, Mr. West delivered himself of the opinion that "George Bush doesn't care about black people." For the sake of attendees at his parties, as well as for the general level of sanity in the public square, let's hope we have heard the last of Mr. West for a while. Twenty years would be about right.

■ For a few days in August, visitors to London Zoo were treated to a new exhibit: Eight human beings, minimally clothed, and caged in a rocky enclosure behind a sign with the legend: "Warning: Humans in Their Natural Environment." The point of the exhibit, according to the zoo's spokeswoman, was to teach zoo-goers that "the human is just another primate," and to let them "have a gawk at people." Numberless questions come to mind. Don't they have reality TV in England? How is a rocky, caged enclosure "natural" to

THE DISAPPEARANCE

*Cindy Sheehan, where are you?
Only yesterday you blew
Into Crawford like a 5;
Could it be Katrina? I've
Tried to query Michael Moore
And MoveOn, but that lot's dour
As George Soros in a snit.
You left, like, lickety-split.*

—W. H. VON DREELE



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THE WEEK...

modern human beings? If we are just another primate, would that spokesprimate be happy to share her house with, say, an orangutan? Given the history of man's beastliness to man this past few decades, wouldn't it be more educational to emphasize those characteristics that set us *above* the brute creation? We are, for example, the only animal that puts other animals in cages to be viewed.

■ Readers of Joe Haldeman's 1975 novel *The Forever War*, which described military life and manners in an imagined future, will recall that enlisted soldiers were expected to respond to the commands of their drill instructors with a loud and clear "F*** YOU, SIR!" Apparently inspired by Haldeman's utopia, a secondary school in Northamptonshire,

England, is permitting students aged 15 and 16 to use that same taboo word in class, though on a strictly rationed basis. "Within each lesson the teacher will initially tolerate (although not condone) the use of the f-word (or derivatives) five times and these will be tallied on the board so all students can see the running score," says the letter sent to parents to announce this policy. Asked to justify the policy, the school's headmaster responded with: "The reality is that the f-word is part of these young adults' everyday language." Odd, isn't it, how the words "The reality is . . ." invariably seem to preface some small surrender to barbarism? Our own disgust at this further advance toward civilizational suicide is too deep to express in words, four-letter or otherwise—is, in fact, ineffable . . .

■ In his essay "Decline of the English Murder" George Orwell lamented the eclipse of "the old domestic poisoning dramas, product of a stable society where the all-prevailing hypocrisy did at least ensure that crimes as serious as murder



Raining Race

WHAT does it say about America that the people left behind are poor and black?" So asked countless cable-news anchors once they'd been given the green light to muster their prolier-than-thou rage. For the first day or two after Katrina's devastation became known, the race-and-class card was kept in the deck. Then, suddenly, it became clear—at least to certain commentators—that race and class were where the action was. All of the faults, real and imagined, of the federal response had to be motivated by racial insensitivity or even outright racism on the part of the Bush administration.

The Congressional Black Caucus issued their usual condemnations. Jesse Jackson showed up on the scene like a personal-injury lawyer shaking awake the victims of a calamity long enough to sign them up as clients. Randall Robinson, the former president of TransAfrica, announced that "black hurricane victims"—not hurricane victims in general, just the black ones—were feeding on human corpses after a mere three or four days without food. Apparently, declaring that it doesn't take much for blacks to become ghouls does not count as racist if the messenger is pure enough. (Robinson retracted his statement.)

So what does it say that the majority of those left behind in New Orleans were disproportionately poor and black? Well, for starters, it might be an indication that New Orleans is a disproportionately poor and black city. Wouldn't it be odd if, in a city that is two-thirds black, a majority left behind were not black? Similarly, in a city with a poverty rate of roughly 25 percent, is it so shocking that those without a place to go or a car to get there might also be overrepresented among those

left behind? Also, perhaps it makes a certain amount of sense that those who rely greatly on the generosity of government to get by were the ones disproportionately affected by the failure of government to deliver them to safety.

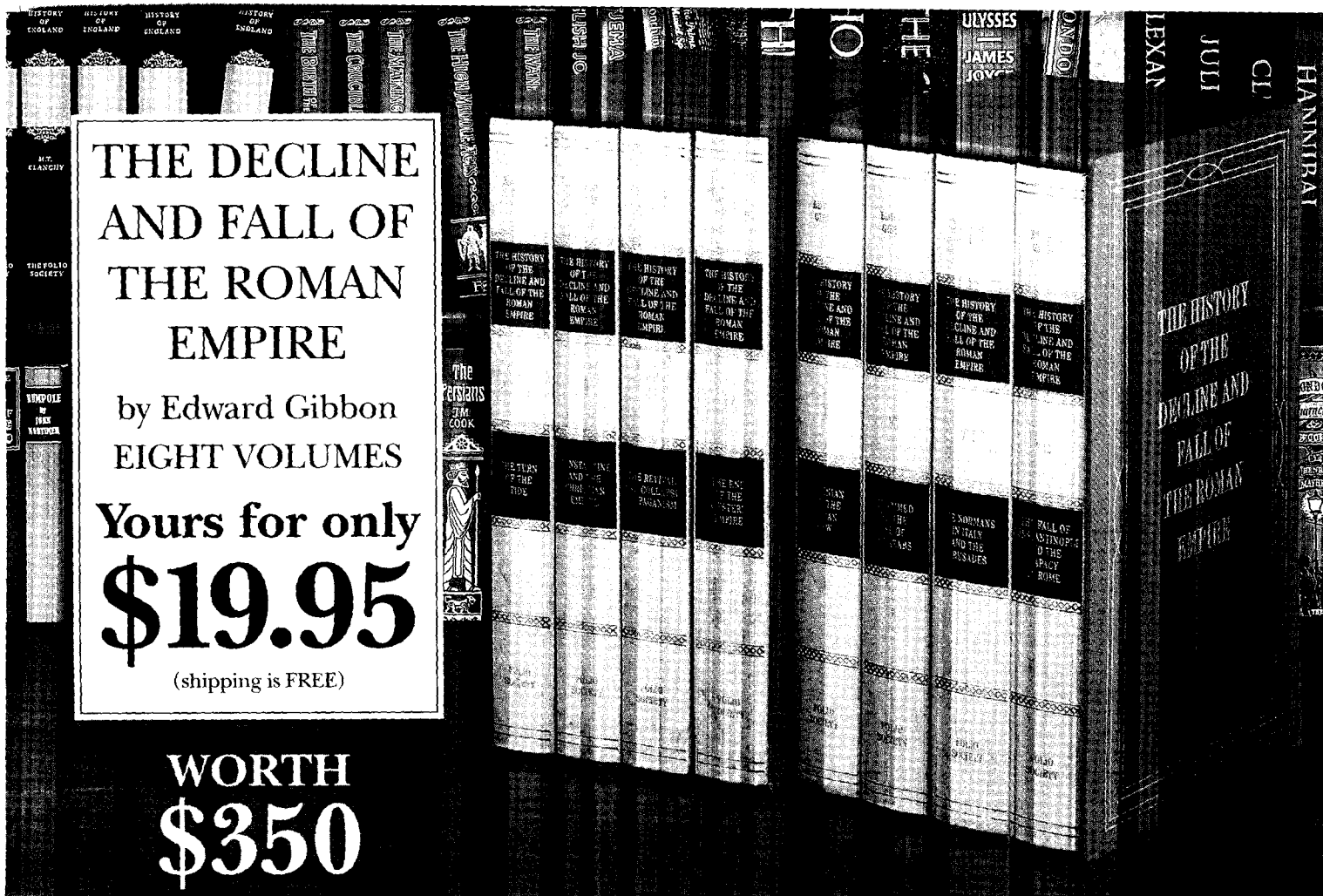
The (black) mayor of New Orleans explained that his "plan" was to "get people to higher ground and have the feds and the state air-lift supplies to them—that was the plan, man." And, according to a *Times-Picayune* article earlier this year, Nagin and other state officials told the poorest of the poor that they were "on their own" should the hurricane hit. It seems indisputable that if George W. Bush said such a thing, he would be denounced as a racist.

The "shock, shock" that poor blacks were least prepared to handle such a calamity is itself shocking. Isn't the whole point of the "war" on poverty that poverty makes life more difficult?

A certain cognitive dissonance runs like a faultline through liberalism. On one hand, we're told that racial profiling in college admissions and elsewhere is necessary to compensate for the educational, economic, and social deficiencies of minorities—the same deficiencies, we're told, that constitute the "root causes" of crime, out-of-wedlock births, etc. On the other hand, we're told that racial profiling in law enforcement has no efficacy, and no basis in morality—even though the exact same logic applies.

The danger inherent to the liberal complaints is that they prompt a host of questions liberals do not want asked. Why was there so much less criminal behavior in white areas? Is poverty more a cause of social pathologies or a symptom of them? Katrina showed that a majority of poor blacks behaved precisely as liberals would predict, with decency, dignity, and resolve. It also showed that a significant minority of blacks behaved precisely as conservatives have long warned. In short, this whole spectacle said a great deal about America, black and white. But it certainly doesn't say anything new.

—JONAH GOLDBERG



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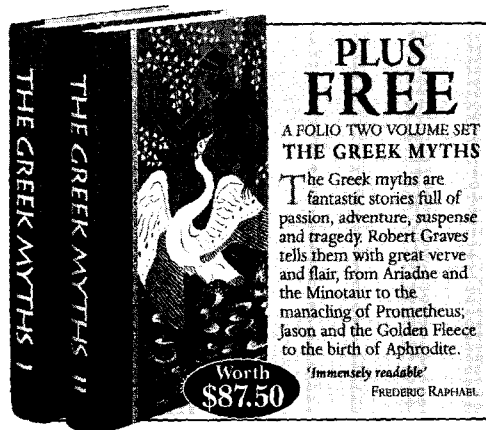
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THE WEEK...

should have strong emotions behind them." He would have loved the story of Nancy Kissel, sentenced to death in Hong Kong for murdering her husband, who was a senior banker at Merrill Lynch. Mrs. Kissel did the deed by feeding her spouse a strawberry milkshake laced with the "date rape" drug Rohypnol, then, when he was comatose, inflicting fatal cranial depressions by use of an eight-pound leaden art object. The attack followed several months of infidelity on Mrs. Kissel's part with an appliance repairman in Vermont, whither she had fled to escape the 2003 SARS outbreak. Mr. Kissel had responded with some obnoxious spying, and things had gone from bad to worse. Other factors were large insurance policies, and demands made by Mr. Kissel for irregular forms of sexual relief. Goodness! Our society may no longer be as stable as the one whose passing Orwell mourned, but with money, passion, high society, and unorthodox sex in play, we feel that as murders go nowadays, this one reached a pretty high standard.

■ Here is one of our occasional reports from the world of art, which, as regular readers will know, has come a long way from the casting of bronze horses and the painting of still lifes. Recall that the death of the great Red Sox hitter Ted Williams, back in July 2002, was followed by a nasty legal wrangle over the disposal of the remains. The winner was Williams's son, John-Henry, who had his dad frozen in liquid nitrogen, for resuscitation at some future date. As a normal part of this procedure, the Williams frozen cadaver was decapitated, the head being stored separately. Well, sculptor Daniel Edwards, inspired to creativity by this story, is displaying copies of the late swatter's head, modeled on the frozen original, with assistance from some photographs of Williams when alive. These objects, made of plaster, are surrounded by Williams and Red Sox memorabilia, and immersed in liquid nitrogen for that touch of authenticity. Alcor Life Extension Foundation of Scottsdale, Ariz., which performed the refrigeration of Mr. Williams, issued an indignant statement condemning the sculptor for seeking to "exploit Ted Williams and his family for monetary gain." No, no, no. This has nothing to do with money, this is *art*, don't you see?

■ Jude Wanniski, supply-side guru and occasional NR contributor, died age 69. Richard Brookhiser remembers him on page 48 of this issue. R.I.P.

■ Robert Moog's contribution to the music of the spheres was a practical electronic synthesizer, which he developed in the Sixties. We think of musical instruments as fixed quantities, which we learn to play as children, and whose repertoires sit, recorded, in orderly categories in stores. But every instrument was invented, and some have passed away. Haydn wrote trios for the baryton, because his patron, Prince Esterházy, owned one. Mozart wrote several pieces using the unearthly glass armonica, developed by Benjamin Franklin. Bach's viola da gamba and John Dowland's lute gave way to the

cello and guitar. So far Herbie Hancock, the Beatles, and They Might Be Giants are among those inspired by the Moog synthesizer. Inventing an instrument is like inventing a color. Mr. Moog died age 71. R.I.P.

HURRICANE KATRINA

Disaster Area

KATRINA was not the perfect storm imagined by disaster enthusiasts—a Category 5 plowing just to the west of New Orleans. But it will do until that storm arrives—a Category 4 sweeping near enough to that point, raising a surge variously calculated at 25 to 29 feet, either one eligible to be the highest to hit the American coast since surges were measured. The disaster area of 9/11 was a few square miles of Manhattan, northern Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Katrina's Gulf Coast disaster area was about the size of Great Britain.

Almost equally great was the cultural and political disaster area that Katrina encountered. The alluring qualities of New Orleans that charm visitors—good music, edible food, year-round spring break, voodoo—are entwined with other less charming qualities—corruption, fecklessness, a squalid political class. Gov. Kathleen Blanco dithered and wept; Mayor Ray Nagin cursed and blustered. The city's tiny police force became tinier as overwhelmed officers went AWOL. Misdirected and misled, the city's poor, who ought to have been made to evacuate, suffered and sweltered and were preyed upon by the feral among them. There were many instances of heroism—hospital staff who labored to care for their patients; Jabbar Gibson, a 20-year-old who commandeered a school bus and drove a load of refugees to Houston. But when the general level is low, thugs and incompetents set the tone.

New Orleans offered liberals their very own 9/11. It provided enemies they could understand—wind and water; victims they could understand—poor blacks; and solutions they could understand—bigger government and more money. Mickey Kaus, one of the most sensible of them, eschewed partisan point-scoring to assail federalism head-on: Get rid of states and governors, he argued, and put all disaster relief (and other intermediate functions of government) directly in federal hands. Liberals should be careful what they ask for, lest they get it, for the feds did not shine. FEMA, a pork butcher shop stuffed into the new Department of Homeland Security, will now most likely be broken out again, and perhaps raised into a cabinet-level slot of its own—without any effect on its performance, or its long-range planning.

In the early days of Katrina, President Bush stumbled just as he did after 9/11. Partly because of his own abilities and limitations, George W. Bush regards rhetoric as fustian—the prattle of know-nothings and do-nothings. Often he is right. But sometimes rhetoric must serve. Words fitly spoken affect the real world—focusing people's minds and hearts. President Bush is too old to change; such performances as he gave early this month exact a political cost. The later federal response, spearheaded by the military, has been well oiled and impressive. But the stain of the wrenching first week remains.

Forbes FYI

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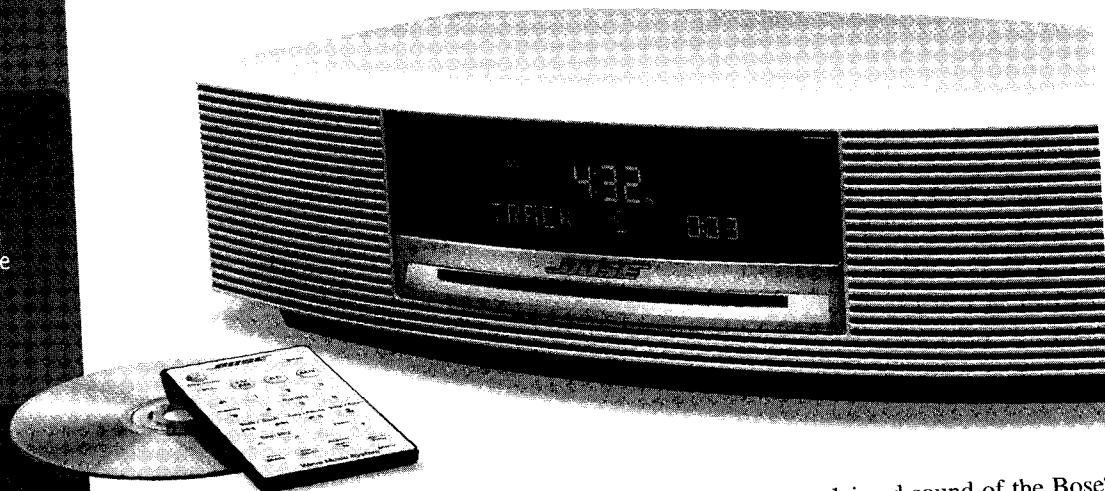
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HURRICANE KATRINA II

The Blame Game

THE wind had barely stopped blowing from Hurricane Katrina, before Bush's critics were fixing the blame on him.

Global warming, which is occurring because of Bush's rejection of Kyoto, caused the recent upswing in hurricanes and fueled this especially powerful Category 4 storm. No: The frequency of hurricanes moves in cycles. The 1970s through the mid-1990s had been a calm period, even as the globe had heated up. Prior to Katrina, of the five most destructive storms of the last 100 years, only Andrew (in 1992) occurred after 1950.

Bush failed to provide full funding for the upkeep of New Orleans's levees and approved development that shrank the wetlands around New Orleans that might have mitigated Katrina's storm surge. Bush did pare back the Army Corps of Engineers funding requests for the levees. But all the funding the Corps wanted wouldn't have saved New Orleans, since its levees were designed to withstand only a Category 3 hurricane, not a more powerful Category 4 like Katrina. As the website RedState.org pointed out, proposals were made last year to upgrade the levees to handle a Category 5, but even the studies to determine how to do it wouldn't have been completed until 2008. As for the wetlands, they have been depleted primarily as a consequence of efforts to control the flooding of the Mississippi River.

The commitment of National Guard troops in Iraq meant insufficient Guard to help after Katrina. Only about a third of Louisiana's Guard were deployed to Iraq, and the National Guard from other states were available to help. Needless to say, more troops would be available for disaster relief if we never fought foreign wars, but fighting enemies overseas is exactly why we maintain such a large, technically proficient military in the first place.

Bush dithered while the relief effort stalled and people needlessly died. This is the charge that is doing Bush the most damage. It is true that the federal response could have been swifter. We would have preferred that—given the unprecedented scale of the disaster and the civil disorder in the city—Bush had federalized the National Guard and brushed Gov. Kathleen Blanco aside to the extent possible. But there is an irony in hearing liberals kept awake at night by the “library search” provisions of the Patriot Act expressing impatience with constraints on the federal government's power to deploy the military in domestic situations.

The original sin in New Orleans was the failure to evacuate the city more thoroughly before the hurricane. After the hurricane and the flooding, with some 100,000 people still there, search-and-rescue would become a heartbreakingly time-consuming effort to pluck people from their roofs and attics. New Orleans officials had been warned that the city's poorest residents didn't have cars and therefore had no plausible means of escape. They had a plan to effect a mandatory evacuation in such circumstances, but it was never implemented and school buses that might have been used for the purpose

were left in their lot to flood (see cover picture). Instead, residents were told to walk to the Superdome, where there were insufficient supplies for the days ahead. Once New Orleans was flooded, civic order quickly broke down as thugs took over what was a poorly policed, incompetently run city even in the best of circumstances.

States share the initial responsibility for disaster management with their localities. In this case, Governor Blanco was no better suited for the job than Mayor Ray Nagin. She delayed important decisions, didn't coordinate sufficiently with New Orleans, and stood in the way of attempts to streamline the command-and-control of the National Guard and active-duty troops who flowed to Louisiana. Her forte seemed to be crying, nicely complementing Nagin's ability to yell, thus making for a perfect storm of ineffectual venting that was the exact opposite of Rudy Giuliani's post-9/11 leadership.

Of course, Hurricane Katrina—for which no one is to “blame”—was an overwhelming disaster. Any government would have strained to cope with it, and only the U.S. military had the capacities to match the flood in New Orleans once it had done its worst. But government and how it is run matters. New Orleans and Louisiana have been ill served by the incompetence and unseriousness of their political leadership. Lives have been lost because of it, in a great city that is now reduced to a gigantic, stinking potter's field.

THE LAW

Rehnquist and His Court

CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM REHNQUIST's death brings to an end a long and praiseworthy career of public service. When he came to the Supreme Court, there was no Federalist Society. Antonin Scalia was not a justice; Clarence Thomas had not even been graduated from law school. The closest thing to another conservative on the Court was Byron White, a Kennedy appointee. It was a lonely time to insist on constraints on the power of the federal judiciary. (Rehnquist was the only Republican justice to dissent from *Roe v. Wade*.) Rehnquist never succumbed to the prevailing fashion. If any conservative reformation of the federal judiciary happens now, he will be counted among its originators.

Yet there is a reason the chief justice had gotten encomia from liberals in his last years, and for years before that had not drawn the criticism that Justices Scalia and Thomas regularly receive. It was not just respect and sympathy for an old and ailing man that stayed the critics. Rather, Rehnquist had failed to lead the Court toward a principled constitutionalism in exercising the power of judicial review. That failure followed partly from his inability or unwillingness to articulate and defend consistent legal principles, even if he did generally favor conservative outcomes.

Yet there is a limit to what a chief justice can accomplish, and the composition of the Court matters more than who is managing it. For that reason, conservatives are better off fighting for a new conservative justice than fighting for the elevation of one of the Court's present conservatives. President Bush was therefore wise to select as his new chief justice John Roberts, whose

career gives us more confidence than not that he will be a conservative jurist.

Attention will now turn to the question of who will replace Roberts as Bush's nominee to replace Justice O'Connor. In particular, attention will turn to the question of whether he should choose a female, black, or Hispanic nominee. We hope he bears in mind that while Roberts could plausibly be seen as more conservative than O'Connor, he is not necessarily to the right of Rehnquist. Unless the president seeks no more than the Court's continuing in the vein of its recent jurisprudence, he should look for a nominee with a demonstrated respect for the text of the Constitution as it was understood by the ratifying public. The would-be justice should also respect the Court's precedents—but be willing to overrule them when they are seriously out of line with the constitutional text. That willingness is especially important in an era when the Court has taken on so many responsibilities and faces few effective checks. The Court's errors have become more important, and if the Court will not correct them itself it is unlikely anyone else will.

We also hope that Bush is as mindful of the drawbacks of the "stealth strategy" as of its advantages. The development of an extensive and sophisticated network of conservative

lawyers centered in Washington, D.C., may have made it less likely that a Republican nominee without a paper trail will turn out to be a liberal. But the risks are greater than for a nominee whose views are a matter of record. Adopting the stealth strategy also tells every member of that network to keep his head down as his career advances—a signal that could end up hurting conservatives in years to come. Finally, the strategy tends both to prevent the open argument for a conservative constitutionalism and, indeed, to associate that cause with a kind of shiftiness.

The president promised to appoint "strict constructionists" in the Scalia/Thomas mold. There are millions of voters whose support for the Republican party is practically contingent on the party's commitment to at least allow a democratic vote on the priorities of social conservatives. We have no objection, in theory, if Bush appoints a nominee whose views about government policy are liberal; but we hope and expect that he will keep his promise about appointing *legal* conservatives.

If President Bush does keep that promise, we will be closer to the goal of a Supreme Court restored to its proper constitutional function—a goal that Chief Justice Rehnquist pointed toward, even if he did not reach it.

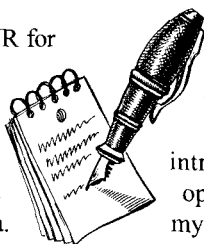
notes & asides

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Thought you would like to know that I just signed up my grandson (aged 7) for a trial subscription to NR. In the gift card, I mentioned that his "grampa" had enjoyed NR since AuH₂O.

Question: Do you think he's old enough to begin reading *Nearer, My God?* How about *God and Man at Yale*?

I'd like to be able to enjoy NR for another 30 years. Are you up to remaining a contributor through 2035?

Best regards,
Bill Jukins
Dunwoody, Ga.



Dear Mr. Jukins: I hadn't thought about it. In 2035 I'll be 110 years old, and wouldn't want to run the risk of letting your grandson down.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Because I highlight and look up unfamiliar words in NR, I spend a great deal of time flipping dictionary pages.

In the late 1980s I discovered "opsimathy" in one of your columns. It has become my favorite and most valued noun. I wonder why this most encourag-

ing word is included in only the older dictionaries. Furthermore, none of the hundreds of people I have asked has known the meaning the word, including a professor of classics. To correct this deficiency I have made bookmarks saying "Cultivate Opsimathy."

Perhaps a bumper sticker reading "Be an Opsimath" would invite more general use of this word.

In any event, thanks to you for introducing me to the concept of opsimathy. It will continue to lift my spirits as I totter into my eightieth decade.

Gratefully,
Nancy Bowman
New Canaan, Conn.

Dear Miss Bowman: Oh, but that won't work! You cannot enjoin anybody to "be" an opsimath, because either he/she did, or did not, undertake to learn at a late age. Well, come to think of it, you're right: If you "become" an opsimath, you become someone devoted to learning at whatever age. So, good luck with your campaign.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: All the hubbub about the propriety of singular or plural verbs with "data" and "media" is nonsense. Well, actually, it's all about "sense," the word dictionaries use to indicate the nuances in word meanings.

The sense of "data" and "media," whether singular or plural, is pretty well understood, but when you talk about "datum," you're more likely speaking of a point of reference than a single fact, and the use of "medium" conjures up images of witches and clairvoyants.

So in order to avoid this confusion, "media" and "data" should be used when referring to the news service (services) and the fact (facts) they (it) endeavor (endeavors) to convey, and "medium" and "datum" should be used only when a different sense is desired. In any case, whether one uses singular or plural verbs is more a matter of style than of grammar. It may be described as form yielding to utility (and if you pluralize that, you've got gas and electricity!).

Cordially,
George W. Hostetler
Upland, Calif.

Dear Mr. Hostetler: That gets pretty complicated, but let's try. Tell me a year from now how you're getting along.

Cordially,
—WFB



■ COVER STORY ■

All the Uglier

What Katrina whipped up

JAY NORDLINGER

FOR years, many of us have noted and analyzed the phenomenon of Bush hatred—and all the unreason, hysteria, and meanness packed into it. But Hurricane Katrina seems to have taken the phenomenon to a new level. A natural disaster has been made all the uglier by the politics surrounding it.

The first response of many to the destruction of New Orleans and other areas was to revile George Bush—and conservatism and Republicans and much else. Obviously, there are legitimate criticisms of the government, at all levels, to be made. In fact, a (conservative) friend of mine cracked, “We said we’d make Iraq look like the United States, and so we have.” But legitimate criticism has often

been lost in spiteful lunacy. Katrina was an occasion to rehearse all of one’s fears and opinions and obsessions about the War on Terror, global warming, capitalism, the federal budget, race. Katrina was an invitation to bust a political gut.

Exhibit A in the awfulness of Katrina reaction was the piece by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. for The Huffington Post (a prominent website). The title over the piece was Biblical: “For They That Sow the Wind Shall Reap the Whirlwind.” RFK Jr., of course, is not only the bearer of an illustrious name; he is a leader of the environmentalist movement in America.

“As Hurricane Katrina dismantles Mississippi’s Gulf Coast,” Kennedy wrote, “it’s worth recalling the central

role that Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour played in derailing the Kyoto Protocol and kiboshing President Bush’s iron-clad campaign promise to regulate CO₂.” Kennedy is concerned here about a memo that Barbour, as a lobbyist, wrote in 2001. It urged the administration to follow an anti-Kyoto course.

Later in his piece, Kennedy wrote, “Now we are all learning what it’s like to reap the whirlwind of fossil fuel dependence which Barbour and his cronies have encouraged. Our destructive addiction has given us a catastrophic war in the Middle East and—now—Katrina is giving our nation a glimpse of the climate chaos we are bequeathing our children.”

The author concluded, “In 1998, Republican icon Pat Robertson warned that hurricanes were likely to hit communities that offended God. Perhaps it was Barbour’s memo that caused Katrina, at the last moment, to spare New Orleans and save its worst flailings for the Mississippi coast.”

Needless to say, RFK Jr. was wrong about the sparing of New Orleans. He was forced to write an update: “Alas, the reprieve for New Orleans was only temporary. But Haley Barbour still has much to answer for.” In Kennedy’s scribblings, much of the Left’s ugliness about Katrina and the Republicans is encapsulated.

To an amazing extent, global warming has become all-explaining. It is the cause of our natural ills, in all their diversity. It is an *idée fixe*, a universal bogey. Just as the Jew is both a communist and a capitalist, and the American both a materialist and a puritan, global warming is responsible for heat and cold, drought and flood—anything nature might be throwing at us at the moment. When Al Gore gives a speech on global warming, he is apt to say, “We’ve been having some weird weather lately, haven’t we?” The word *weird* covers a multitude of conditions.

After Katrina, Sidney Blumenthal, President Clinton’s former aide, pointed his finger: “At the G8 meeting in Gleneagles [Scotland] this year, Bush stymied any common action on global warming.” The German environmental minister, Jürgen Trittin, wrote, “Greenhouse gases have to be radically reduced and it has to happen worldwide. Until now, the U.S. has kept its eyes shut to this emergency.”

ROMAN GENN

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In particular, "the American president is closing his eyes . . ." The *Boston Globe* had an op-ed piece by Ross Gelbspan, saying, "The hurricane that struck Louisiana yesterday was nicknamed Katrina by the National Weather Service. Its real name is global warming."

But blogger Arthur Chrenkoff gave "the prize for originality" to Russell Shaw, who, like Robert F. Kennedy Jr., writes for The Huffington Post. Mused Shaw, "Would New Orleans and the nearby Gulf Coast be suffering so terribly today if President Carter beat back Reagan in 1980? . . . I am wondering if those voters in Louisiana and Mississippi who helped polluter-allied Reagan win in 1980 would have found themselves fated differently under a second Carter term."

Forgetting the questionability (to say the least) of attributing Hurricane Katrina to global warming or pollution: Shaw's musings dance up to, "They had it coming." So do RFK Jr.'s. Throughout the Muslim world, they were saying that Katrina was a weapon of God, that America had, so to speak, reaped the whirlwind. Are these foreign nuts and haters so different from our respected commentators at home?

When things go wrong, people want a culprit, a demon, and the American president often serves that purpose. There was never a more humane man than our 31st president, yet camps for the destitute were called "Hoovervilles"—a gallingly nasty jab. Today, some people are referring to flooded New Orleans as "Lake George." Bush was repeatedly portrayed as oblivious to the disaster, entranced by his ranch. Howell Raines, the former executive editor of the *New York Times*, wrote that Bush was providing a lesson in "how to vacation through an apocalypse." Around the world went a picture of Bush playing a guitar—you see, this was his Nero, Rome-burning moment. But the president had been handed a guitar by a country singer after a speech marking the 60th anniversary of V-J Day. Bush was not merely fiddling around.

Contradictions abounded: For years,

the National Guard had been mocked as a refuge for weenies—"chickenhawks"—such as Dan Quayle and George W. Bush. Now the National Guard was heroic, but Bush had made these men unavailable by sending them to an "unnecessary" and "immoral" war in the Middle East. Bush had been a ruinous big spender—but the Democratic National Committee, through its blog, quickly came up with a different line: "Bush is already focusing

on avoiding any kind of accountability for this tragedy. But his budget cuts are responsible for what we're seeing." Think of the weight of the words *are responsible for what we're seeing*.

Everyone said that money should be taken from X program or endeavor (whatever the individual disfavored) and given to hurricane relief. It reminded me of one of my favorite political cartoons ever: Speaker O'Neill has

his arm around President Reagan, and is saying, "Do you know how many hot school lunches your \$100 million in aid to the Contras would buy?" (Hot school lunches were a hot trope in the 1980s.) "I do, Tip," answers Reagan: "Half as many as your \$200 million in aid to Northern Ireland."

And all of us conservatives were again lectured on the utility and importance of government: They did this to us after 9/11, too. "Ha, ha," went the cry. "See, you conservatives, how needed government is?" Shortly after Katrina, *The Nation's* David Corn wrote, "Barbour led the GOP when it was waging war on Big Government. Now he's all for it."

Conservatives responded just as they did after 9/11: Government—the federal government—has its responsibilities, and its non-responsibilities. We are against midnight basketball, free prescription drugs for the wealthy, maybe Amtrak. We are not against combatting terror and helping masses of Americans after the worst hurricane we have ever known.

"Big Oil" came in for it too—and the chairman of the Democratic National Committee used exactly those cartoonish words: "It's time for the president to step

up and put the needs of the American people ahead of profits for his pals in Big Oil." Howard Dean will be Howard Dean. More vitriolic was a blogger who enjoyed 15 minutes of fame, or infamy. Said Joseph Cannon, "The National Guard was off in Iraq stealing oil—and everything else in that nation—all to benefit Halliburton and the oil companies." He added, "A large part of me still believes that many of these W-worshipping numbskulls *deserve* to suffer and to die. They brought it on themselves. Let them look to Jayzuss [Jesus] for aid: It's time they stopped leeching off the more productive blue staters."

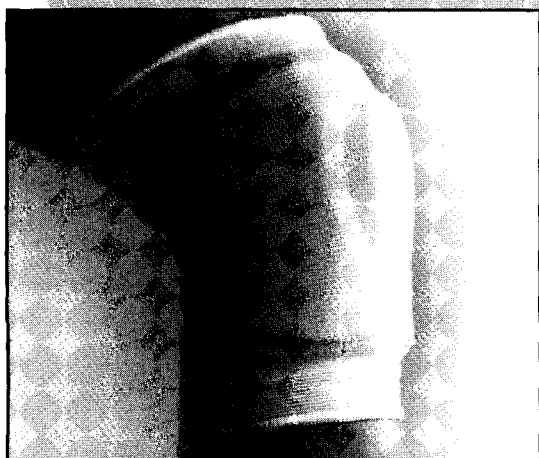
I stress the point of gratuitous cruelty. And it did not come merely from red-hot bloggers. Have another taste of Howell Raines: "The churchgoing cultural populism of George Bush has given the United States an administration that worries about the House of Saud and the welfare of oil companies while the poor drown in their attics and their sons and daughters die in foreign deserts." In addition, there were the usual charges of racism, made by the usual chargers. And here is Air America's Randi Rhodes, with a typical comment about the president: "I think somewhere deep down inside him he takes a lot of joy about losing people, if he thinks they vote Democrat or if he thinks they're poor or if he thinks they're in a blue state . . ."

With a certain crowd, George Bush will never be able to win. As was widely pointed out, he was criticized last summer for responding "too quickly" to Hurricane Charley, which was in Florida: a key electoral state, don't you know, and this was an election year. And now he is said to have been slow on Katrina. He is either in the way or harmfully missing—depending on your psychic and polemical needs.

We conservatives sometimes seem insincere when we say we regret the Michael Moore-ization of the Democratic party (to use a shorthand). Sometimes we *are* insincere. But mostly we mean it, I think. Another conservative friend of mine—not the previously cited quipper—observed that the Left, once again, was overplaying its hand, with fierce Bush hatred. Probably true. But this performance was grotesque and disheartening all the same. **NR**

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The Government Point

It's not conservatives who need the lesson

JONAH GOLDBERG

IMAGINE your house catches fire. The local fire department arrives on the scene and puts out the blaze. You're understandably grateful to the brave men and women who saved your life and the lives of your family. You feel like your tax dollars were well spent.

Afterward, the fire marshal gives you some useful literature about how to rebuild and repair. He also gives you some information about insurance—which you already got from your agent. But his heart's in the right place, so you take it from him gratefully anyway.

The fire marshal then walks you through your house and points out things you could do better to prevent another fire. You say thanks. Really, thanks a lot. He then opens up your fridge. Tsk, tsk. "This is no good," he tells you.

"What?" you ask, wondering if the wiring is bad.

"You've got way too many foods with trans-fats in here," he explains with heartfelt condescension. "This cheese will kill you," he remarks as he tosses it into the garbage. He then walks into the living room, plops down on the couch, and after complaining about its poor ergonomics, informs you that you shouldn't have bought such an expensive TV when you could have put that money into a 529 plan for your kids' college education. "Okay, uh, thanks," you tell him. "Shouldn't you be heading back to the firehouse?"

"Just a few more things . . .," he says, as he takes out his clipboard and clicks his ballpoint pen. Later that night he explains—bluntly—the importance of

safe sex to you and your wife and tells your kids that masturbation is a healthy part of adolescent development. After tearing the crucifix from your wall ("This just won't do"), he informs you he'll be back in the morning to work out a payment schedule for his services. "For your own good," he explains with a smile.

The lesson of this parable should be pretty obvious. With the exception of a handful of our libertarian brethren, nobody objects to the idea that the government should help put out fires. Fighting crime, winning wars, ensuring clean drinking water, responding to natural disasters, preventing the outbreak of horrible epidemics: These are all things very few conservatives dispute should generally be within the portfolio of Uncle Sam. We may argue about the best way to do such things.

For instance, crime is overwhelmingly a local issue. But when organized crime begins operating across state lines or when local governments become hopelessly corrupt, the feds step in with very few complaints from the "anti-Big Government crowd"—to use a derisory phrase of the, well, Big Government Crowd. In other words, we're all for the firemen being firemen, but then we want them to go home.

The infuriating thing is that the Left insists we have to buy the whole package. It's like going to buy a car and being told that if you want the steering wheel and engine, you have to buy the Global Positioning System and an environmental-purification system, and then enroll in a one-year course on safe driving, too.

Ever since Bill Clinton declared that "the era of big government is over," liberals have been looking for signs of its second coming. As Ramesh Ponnuru noted in *NATIONAL REVIEW* after the September 11 attacks, liberals tried to piggyback the need for government to fight the War on Terror with the "need" for government to expand across the board. This is an ancient tactic among American liberals, one stretching back

to John Dewey's invocation of the "social benefits of war" as a justification for intervention in World War One. "This catastrophe has reminded us of a basic truth at the heart of our democracy," Bill Moyers wrote at the time. "No matter our wealth or status or faith, we are all equal before the law, in the voting booth, and when death rains down from the sky." And therefore, Moyers oddly concluded, it was vital we expand the size and scope of the entire welfare state (never mind that we would be just as equal when death rains from the sky in a dictatorship or monarchy). A "news analysis" in the *New York Times* proclaimed that "Big Government Is Back in Style." (One imagines the newsroom cheering at this news like the NASA flight-control crew upon confirmation of a successful splashdown.)

Perhaps the most revealing pronouncement came from New York senator Chuck Schumer, who penned an op-ed for the *Washington Post* entitled "Big Government Looks Better Now." Schumer explained it was time for a massive expansion in the size and scope of the national government. Nothing less than "the 'new' New Deal is upon us. The president can either lead the charge or be run over by it." But let's not forget that George W. Bush did expand the size and scope of the federal government *enormously* in response to 9/11—but still Senator Schumer was not satisfied.

In the wake of Katrina, the urge to blame Bush distracted many liberals from going straight to the argument that the Big Easy's plight proved the need for Big Government. But a few early birds took the worm and you can be sure more will follow. Kevin Drum of *The Washington Monthly* concluded that Katrina proved that the difference between conservatives and liberals is that conservatives don't support institutions like FEMA, while liberals do. Funny how all those arguments over abortion, affirmative action, Communism, Iraq, immigration, and the rest were mere ornaments

Ever since Bill Clinton declared that 'the era of big government is over,' liberals have been looking for signs of its second coming.

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- Fourth, argumentation is not mere quarreling; it is the study of human communication that seeks to persuade through reasoned judgment, and it is a deeply social and cooperative practice. (Though there are places where winning an argument rather than finding the truth is prized, this is not why most of us exchange arguments.)

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About Your Professor

Dr. Zarefsky is the Owen L. Coon Professor of Argumentation and Debate and Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, where he has taught for over 30 years. The Student Government of Northwestern has elected Professor Zarefsky to the Honor Roll for Teaching 12 times.

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on the real hinge of American politics—FEMA.

Meanwhile, E. J. Dionne wrote in the *Washington Post* that the Katrina disaster proved “Cohen’s Law,” an axiom coined by former senator and defense secretary William Cohen: “Government is the enemy until you need a friend.” Cohen’s point, according to Dionne, “was that government-bashing is easy in good times for those doing just fine. But when disaster strikes, many turn around and ask why government didn’t do more to prevent a catastrophe—or why it wasn’t doing more to relieve its effects.” At times like this, “government is morally obligated to be competent, prepared, innovative, flexible, well-financed—in short, smart enough and, yes, big enough to undertake an enormous task.”

Now, here’s the rub. If by big enough they meant big enough to fight a war and save people from drowning in downtown New Orleans at the same time, you’d hear no guff from conservatives. If by well financed, they meant a government living within its means, most conservatives would cheer. And if by flexible, competent, innovative, and the rest, they had in mind a government nimble enough to do the things it’s supposed to do and sharp enough to recognize what it should not do, we’d all be huzzahing. But let’s be honest: This is not really what we are talking about now, is it? In 2004, when the federal government was supposedly neglecting the much-needed repair work of New Orleans’s levees, its congressmen celebrated the fact that they won tens of millions of dollars in federal spending for a new streetcar system. The No Child Left Behind and Violence Against Women acts aren’t exactly the sort of thing a supple, ninja-like government bothers with if it’s going to be ready to handle the big challenges that come its way.

The big, competent government that liberals want is less a heroic fireman than a bloated bureaucrat who meddles in other people’s business, creating hassles and inefficiencies wherever he goes. And whenever we complain about this busybody we get the retort, “What? You don’t want him to put out fires?”

NR

■ COVER STORY III

The Veneer of Civilization

Utterly removed

THEODORE DALRYMPLE

THE French socialist philosopher who was much ridiculed by Marx as a sentimental petit-bourgeois moralist, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, is now remembered mainly for his aphorism, so good that he repeated it many times, “Property is theft.” But in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the reverse of this celebrated but preposterous dictum has actually become true: Theft is property.

Pictures of the looting that followed the devastation in New Orleans have been flashed around the world. Everyone is, or at least pretends to be, shocked and horrified, as if the breakdown of law and order couldn’t happen here, wherever here happens to be. Smugness is, after all, one of the most pleasant of feelings; but for myself, I have very little doubt that it could, and would, happen where I live, in Britain, under the same or similar conditions. New Orleans shows us in the starkest possible way the reality of the thin blue line that protects us from barbarism and mob rule.

Of course, an unknown proportion of the looting must have arisen from genuine need and desperation. Who among us would not help himself to food and water if he and his family were hungry and thirsty, and there were no other source of such essentials to hand?

But the pictures that have been printed in the world’s newspapers are not those of people maddened by hunger and thirst, but those of people wading through water clutching boxes of goods that are clearly not for immediate consumption. There are

Dr. Dalrymple, the Dietrich Weissman fellow of the Manhattan Institute, is a prison psychiatrist in Britain, and the author most recently of *Our Culture, What’s Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses*.

pictures of people standing outside stores, apparently discussing what to take and how to transport it, and of men loading the trunks of cars with a dozen cartons of nonessentials. They are thinking ahead, to when the normal economy reestablishes itself, and the goods that they have stolen will have a monetary value once more.

Moreover, desperation for food and drink hardly explains why rescue helicopters should have been fired at, and a pediatric hospital attacked by a gang on the lookout for whatever it could find. The fact is—or perhaps I should more modestly say that it is likely—that the conditions brought about by Hurricane Katrina actually suit a ruthless element of society that wants to prolong them a little, to protect its unaccustomed power and freedom to extort. In conditions of anarchy, a crude and violent order, based upon brute force and psychopathic ruthlessness, soon establishes itself, which regards philanthropy not as a friend but as an enemy and a threat.

Is it enough just to sit back and sigh that human nature was ever thus, and that what has happened in New Orleans is exactly what any attentive reader of William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* would have predicted? In that book, you might remember, a group of English schoolchildren, all from good and civilized homes, is cast ashore on an isolated tropical island without adult supervision. Before long, a kind of savage order exerts itself, with the most ruthless rising to positions of leadership. In other words, take external constraint away from even the most civilized (as the English still prided themselves on being in 1954, when the book was published), and savagery results because raw human nature decrees that it should.

Yet this is perhaps a little too easy and falsely comforting. After all, even in New Orleans, most of the people left in the city after the hurricane had devastated it were not looters, at least not of items carried off wholesale for future sale. The roaming gangs that so complicated the rescue effort, and that preyed on people more unfortunate than they, were a comparatively small proportion of the population. While it is true that all of us who were born with original sin (or whatever you want to call man’s fundamental natural flaws) are capable of savagery in the right circumstances, by no means all of us immediately lose our veneer of civilization in condi-

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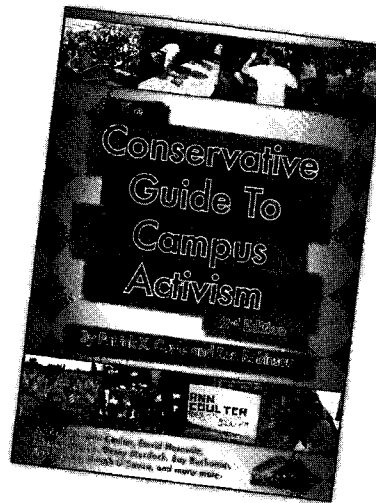
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tions of adversity, however great. A veneer may be thin, but this makes it more, not less, precious, and its upkeep more, not less, important.

Moreover, there is a very uncomfortable question that we have a duty to ask: Is the kind of behavior seen in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina inevitable after a natural disaster of such proportions? If it isn't, what does this tell us about New Orleans, the United States, and any other place—such as, I believe, Britain—where the same conduct would have made itself evident?

The experience of foreign survivors of the tsunami that caused such fatal damage throughout coastal Southeast Asia, and that of those who survived the hurricane in New Orleans, have been very different, or at least very differently reported. I suspect that the difference in reported experience is real rather than a journalistic artifact.

The survivors of the tsunami reported their terror at the size and destructive force of the wave, of course, but in no instance that I recall did they mention having been robbed by other survivors, let alone going in fear of armed gangs. And there were no reports after the recent floods in Bombay, which produced destruction of homes and caused death on a scale not so very different from the hurricane in New Orleans, of looting or other forms of public disorder.

It goes without saying that the population of Bombay is very much poorer than that of New Orleans, incomparably so, in fact. Raw poverty, therefore, cannot explain the disorder in New Orleans and its absence in Bombay. Nor can comparative poverty, that last resort of the liberal who is eager to find an economic explanation of human frailty and wickedness, and who is aware that raw poverty per se will not do the trick. But the gulf between the rich and the poor in Bombay is, if anything, greater than the gulf between them in New Orleans, probably much greater. The ostentatious opulence of the rich in India exceeds that of the rich in America, while anyone who has walked through a Bombay slum will know that nothing remotely comparable exists, or indeed has ever existed, in America. So relative poverty

does not explain the disorder in New Orleans, either.

How, then, are we to explain it? What is the underlying social pathology that accounts for it?

Most of the looters look bitter, angry, resentful, and vengeful as they go about what British burglars are inclined (in all seriousness) to call their "work." The gangs are reported to have used racial taunts during their depredations. In all probability, the looters believe that, in removing as much as they can from stores, they are not so much stealing as performing acts of restitution or compensatory justice for wrongs received. They are not wronging the owners of the stores; on the contrary, the owners of the stores have wronged them over the years by restricting their access to the goods they covet and to which they believe they have a right. The hurricane has thus given them the opportunity to take justice into their own hands and settle old scores.

If this surmise is right, it is a terrible indictment of all the efforts undertaken in recent years by government welfare programs and institutions that practice affirmative action, such as universities, to ameliorate the condition of underclass blacks. It implies that the nihilistic alienation of the looters and gang members is as great as that to be found in Soweto at the height of the apartheid regime. Far from ameliorating the situation, then, the billions spent on welfare programs, and the intellectual ingenuity expended on justifying the unjustifiable in the form of affirmative action, have resulted in a hatred that is bitter and widespread enough among those condescended to in this manner to result in the scenes for which New Orleans will now long be remembered.

If Hurricane Katrina had struck New Orleans in 1950, when the black population could justly have complained of severe oppression and injustice, would we have witnessed what we have witnessed there in recent days? I cannot prove it, but I think the answer is no. And if this is the case, then we must ask ourselves what has lit the fire in the minds of men that they are prepared to shoot at their neighbors' saviors.

NR

■ COVER STORY IV

'Racism!' They Charged

When don't they?

JOHN MCWHORTER

WE have an amazing tolerance for black pain," Jesse Jackson told CNN, implying that the Hurricane Katrina relief effort was delayed because those who were hardest hit were poor and black. Jackson elsewhere drove the point home by comparing the New Orleans convention center, where the refugees were first gathered, to "the hull of a slave ship." Shortly thereafter rapper Kanye West went off-script on an NBC special intended to raise money for the rescue effort. He informed us that "It's been five days because most of the people are black. George Bush doesn't care about black people."

Others have conveyed the point by implication. Rep. Elijah Cummings, when asked on CNN whether racism played a role, said, "I'm not sure. All I know is that a number of the faces that I saw were African-American." Meanwhile, Rep. Diane Watson took issue with calling survivors "refugees": "'Refugee' calls up to mind people that come from different lands and have to be taken care of. These are American citizens." For anyone who thinks that the rescuers saw blacks as less than fellow citizens, the meaning behind Watson's lexicography lesson came through loud and clear.

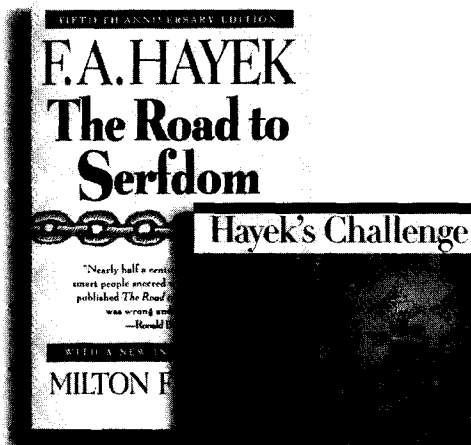
No one will deny that what we have seen on our television screens points to the tragic realities of racial disparity, in an unusually stark way. The almost all-black crowds sweltering, starving, and dying in the convention center have shown us that in New Orleans, as in so many other

Mr. McWhorter is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. His latest book, *Winning the Race: Beyond the Crisis in Black America*, will appear in January 2006 from Gotham Books.

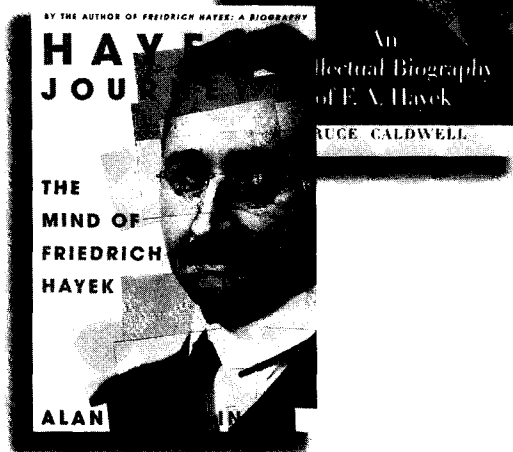
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places, to be poor is often to be black. There is a debate to be had on whether this reality is the legacy of racism—either past or present—but as we face the prospect of finding many thousands of dead as the waters recede, historical debates of this kind can and should wait.

To claim that racism is the reason that the rescue effort was so slow is not a matter of debate at all: It's nothing more than a handy way to get media attention, or to help sell a new CD. It's self-affirming, too, if playing the victim is the only way you know to make yourself feel like you matter.

It is also absurd.

To say "George Bush doesn't care about black people" means that one honestly believes that if it were the poor whites of Louisiana who happened to live closest to the levees, hardly anyone would have gotten wet. Fifty thousand troops would have been standing at the borders of the city as soon as Katrina popped up on meteorologists' radar screens. The National Guard would have magically lifted the long-entrenched bureaucratic restrictions that allow states

to call up troops only when it is proven that they are needed. The U.S. Navy would have anticipated that refugees would number in the tens of thousands, and would have started the days-long process of loading up rescue ships with supplies a week before the storm actually hit. Suddenly, against all historical precedent, just for that week, the Federal Emergency Management Agency would have morphed into a well-organized and dependable outfit.

What previous example is this scenario based on? Surely people who level so trenchant a claim have some precedent in mind. For example, what about the hurricane that Katrina has just displaced as the third strongest on record to hit America? Ground zero for Hurricane Andrew, which left 250,000 people homeless, was Homestead, Fla., where whites were a strong majority. So was help pouring in as soon as the rain stopped?

Not exactly. Few people remember Kate Hale, who had her 15 minutes of fame as the Dade County emergency-management director who asked on national television, "Where in the hell is the cavalry on this one?" People went without electricity or food and dealt with looters for, as it happens, five days—just as in New Orleans. FEMA was raked over the coals for the same bureaucratic incompetence that is making headlines now.

Is it so farfetched to admit that the problem here was the general ineptness of America's defenses against unforeseen disasters? One is inclined to consider the attacks of 9/11. Two presidential administrations neglected increasingly clear signs that Osama bin Laden was planning to attack us on our shores. It's unlikely that anyone supposes that had anything to do with racial bigotry (Clinton was our "first black president," after all). In general, bureaucracies are notoriously bad at foresight and long-term planning, and FEMA has never exactly offered a counterexample.

Of course, there will be those who will insist, no matter what the evidence, that racism slowed the rescue effort. They should, however, do more than strike poses: They should channel their alienation into something more constructive. As hundreds of thousands of poor blacks

return to their home city, where so much will have to be rebuilt from square one, this could be an opportunity to create a coherent all-black enclave that warms the hearts of "black nationalists." With the massive funding from Washington that the reconstruction will require, New Orleans can build new schools with fresh supplies and modern equipment. Welfare-to-work programs can be beefed up with better provisions for childcare. For years to come, the city will offer ample opportunities for poor blacks to get training in construction, white-collar jobs, and—tragically, but usefully—medical and foster care. There will also be an unprecedented chance to create small businesses to serve the community as it rebuilds.

The result could be a thriving black working class in New Orleans. Older blacks fondly recall the struggling but coherent black communities that integration dissolved—sometimes a little "segregation" can be a good thing.

New Orleans is where Homer Plessy boarded a first-class train coach in 1892, which sparked the *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision that legalized segregation nationwide. The Ninth Ward that Katrina pounded was the same Ninth Ward where four black first-grade girls braved racist taunts on national television in 1960, as they took their places in all-white schools. Couldn't the Congressional Black Caucus take this as an opportunity for activism both symbolic and proactive, and work with Louisiana and New Orleans to channel billions of dollars into making a real-life Chocolate City?

People inclined to see "racism" peeking out from behind every rock and tree tend to think poor blacks will be saved only by a Second Civil Rights Revolution. They might take the aftermath of Katrina as the closest thing the real world will ever give them to realizing that dream: a chance to create a strong, working-class black community from the ground up.

Alternatively, one could sit back and savor this moment as an opportunity for the idle catharsis that goes along with the calisthenics of identity politics. That would substitute for the real work of improving people's lives the cheap thrills of feeling good—the Big Easy, indeed. **NR**

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The City I Knew

A small memoir

ROD DREHER

ONE of these days," my father used to tell me, "a hurricane is gonna come right up the Mississippi and hit New Orleans, and that's gonna be all she wrote, cap." There's not a soul alive who was raised, as I was, in south Louisiana who hasn't heard some version of that apocalyptic legend growing up. Now that it has finally happened, I know I can't be the only one taking the news as prophecy fulfilled—not the prophecy of scientists (though it is), but the prophecy of old men who know in their bones that we can't get away with it forever.

"It," of course, doesn't need explaining to New Orleanians, or to anyone who ever tasted the Crescent City's sweetness, or succumbed to her considerable and not entirely respectable charms. As Michael Ledeen has written on National Review Online, New Orleans, like Venice, is a city built, literally and figuratively, on a constant awareness of death, and a resulting commitment to living defiantly well in the face of it. It is America's most Catholic city, as well as its most pagan—and certainly its least American.

For better or worse, New Orleans has always been a sign of contradiction to the sober, sensible American way of life. Ask my disapproving father. I come from St. Francisville, a Protestant town on the Mississippi River north of Baton Rouge, the seat of rural West Feliciana Parish, which figures prominently in Walker Percy's fiction. Daddy's prophecy about New Orleans was widely shared in the region, but I always had the feeling that he wouldn't have thought the city's

destruction entirely undeserved. Not, I hasten to say, that he or anybody else would have wished for what has come to pass; rather, New Orleans was viewed—one winces to use the past tense, but there it is—by many rural Louisianians as many Americans look on New York City: as a corrupt and corrupting metropolis, an arrogant, violent, and high-living city that incubated maleficence.

My father once saw an innocent spectator at a Mardi Gras parade have his back slashed from shoulder to hip with a razor blade in what he took to be a gang initiation. "You get your throat cut in New Orleans," he told me. Country people thought the farther away New Orleans was, the better. To keep New Orleans at bay was to be safer, somehow, from the world.

But I can also remember visiting my elderly aunt Lois Simmons, who lived in a little cabin at the far end of a pecan orchard near our place, and sitting in her tiny kitchen listening to WWL coming through the radio on top of her ancient Frigidaire. Before she retired, Loisie had lived in New Orleans, on a street called Esplanade, a name that breathed grandeur into my young ears. Loisie had lived everywhere, it seemed to me: in Dijon as a Red Cross nurse during the Great War, and then in New York, in Tegucigalpa, and finally New Orleans. How was it possible that a hick child like me had such a mysterious figure in my family—and how had she done so much beyond the pecan orchard? To me, WWL broadcast from some other civilization, one where people lived on streets called Esplanade, and talked about the whole wide world.

My father was right about New Orleans's worldliness, but alas for him, he was wrong about me. I first laid eyes on New Orleans as an adolescent, as part of a Baptist church bus trip to a Saints game. We walked around the French Quarter for hours before the football match, and I was like a kid in Disneyland. So *this* is what New Orleans was! Such beauty, such drama, such life! If you could have this, I thought, why would you want to live anywhere else, especially out in the sticks, where everybody's in bed by 10?

Falling in love with New Orleans was, for me, falling in love with the idea of the city, and of the world of possibility

beyond my small town. And so, when I finally left home, it broke Daddy's heart—even though I headed to Washington, D.C., not to the Big Easy. New Orleans had defeated him, and had won his only son's heart. They cut your throat in Washington, too—and in Miami, where I moved next, and in New York, and in Dallas, where now I live.

Though I spent a lot of time there at Mardi Gras, Jazz Fest, and slumming as an LSU undergrad, I have never lived in New Orleans. But I did get married there. My wife, a Dallas girl, didn't want to jump the broom in her hometown. So we chose New Orleans instead, a place that seemed like our spiritual and cultural home. We gathered with our family and friends at Our Lady of the Rosary parish on, how about that, Esplanade Avenue and pledged our lives to each other one warm December afternoon. Then we all headed over to the Napoleon House, the magnificent old French Quarter bar where a jazz trio of old black men played our first dance, the venerable Mardi Gras anthem "If Ever I Cease To Love." We drank and danced into the early evening, boundlessly happy and endlessly rich.

Later, as we walked to our hotel in our wedding finery, a happy local drunk stumbled into us. "Ooooh baby!" she cooed to my wife. "Congratulations! Congratulations, baby! If you is for real. Because in New Orleans, baby, you never know."

No, you never do, and that is—was—the great allure of that city, and to a lesser degree, any city. It won't do to romanticize New Orleans, even as I mourn her. I had thought in recent years of moving there with my wife and kids, to be closer to home, and to be nurtured by its music, its food, and its lively people, but New Orleans had become too violent—you really were more likely to get your throat cut in New Orleans than in any other American city.

And knowing Louisiana as I do, I had no hope that New Orleans would ever be able to pull herself together. We will, I expect, learn in the weeks and months to come that the moral lassitude that made the city so culturally seductive will have had a very great deal to do with gestating a politics that failed to prepare for the most predictable of all American disasters. New Orleans's criminal class,

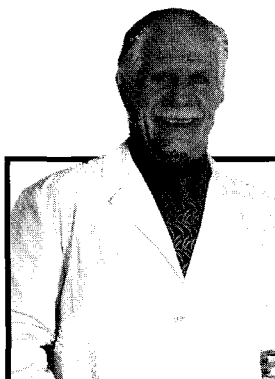
Mr. Dreher is assistant editorial-page editor of the *Dallas Morning News*, a NATIONAL REVIEW contributor, and the author of the forthcoming book *Crunchy Cons*.

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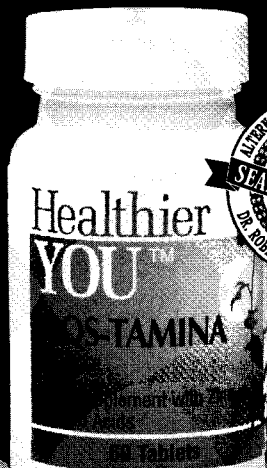
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whether in the Desire projects or in City Hall, has been looting the city for years.

Then again, do we really want New Orleans to pull herself together? Or do—sorry, did—we need her, like a dear and cosmopolitan old auntie, to always be her grand, shabby-genteel self, as a way to remind us of how vivid life can be when the Protestant virtues of sobriety, respectability, and industriousness take a permanent holiday?

Well, the party finally ended, the old bawd has had her reckoning, and given the awesome diaspora of her people, I doubt she'll be back on her feet, except as a shell of her former self. But at least she has a chance. St. Francisville, like so many small towns in Louisiana, has been overwhelmed by a rising tide of evacuees. Moneyed New Orleanians, foreseeing the long odds of ever returning to their former lives, are snapping up property at gold-rush prices—guaranteeing that the rural Feliciana paradise my dad has forever cherished has been washed away forever. Poor Daddy is now a displaced person in his own hometown. We're now starting to see that Katrina destroyed Louisiana villages that got scarcely a drop of rain from her.

Do you know what it means to miss New Orleans? For me, it's not longing for a muffuletta at Central Grocery on Decatur Street, a Pimm's Cup at Napoleon House, a streetcar ride up St. Charles Avenue, or any of the other singular joys of that doomed, decadent city. No, to miss New Orleans is to confront the truth that nothing lasts, that there is not enough money, technology, or attitude in the world to defeat Fortuna when she spins her wheel. To miss New Orleans is to enter into the tragic sense of life. It is, perhaps, to meet the secret to the New Orleanian's *joie de vivre*: the conviction that one of these days, the big one is gonna hit us all, cap, so we must live while we live.

In his sermon at my wedding, the priest told the congregation, which had flown in from all over the country, even Europe, that he hoped we could all gather there again in half a century to celebrate Rod and Julie's 50th wedding anniversary. I despair of that happening now, but who am I to say? In New Orleans, baby, you never know.

NR

■ COVER STORY VI

Different Down There

In America, but not entirely

ROB LONG

EVERY 20 years or so, America reintroduces itself to the Deep South. The details of the encounter shift with each era—in the Twenties, it was the great Mississippi flood; in the Fifties and Sixties, lynchings and murders and civil-rights sit-ins—but the effect is always the same: Pictures and news accounts of a strange, backward place come flashing over the wires, and America is once again united with its colorful, impoverished, and possibly crazy old aunt.

It's redundant, I know, to point out that the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and the resulting breakdown of civic order in New Orleans had a baroque, over-the-top, Tennessee Williams quality to it. Of course it did. Williams didn't invent New Orleans's sleepy, corrupt languor or its violent dark side—he observed those things all around him. And for literary echoes, how about the sheer improbability of a city built, somehow, below sea level, with a giant lake hovering above it like some Sword—no, Bathtub—of Damocles? That's a bit of fatalistic doom right out of Faulkner.

So as the pictures of flooded shanties flicker by on cable news, uptight neatnik midwestern Lutherans and sensitive northeastern urban sophisticates and pompous media grandees on both coasts express shock at the unexpected squalor of the poverty and bafflement over the slovenly corruption of the civic institutions. They cluck-cluck their dismay that the federal government didn't step in sooner, didn't realize earlier that, well, *these people can't organize themselves*. We should have known that the city had no workable plan to contend with a major hurricane. We should have known that Louisiana wasn't the kind of place that crosses the t's, disaster-preparedness-

wise. We should have known. I mean, come on. We've read *All the King's Men*, right? And *Streetcar* and *A Confederacy of Dunces* and all of the rest of the New-Orleans-is-a-splendid-ruin canon?

"I can't believe this is happening in America," people said as the lurid news of looting and rapes and bodies in the streets came spilling out. "This is *America*?" But as anyone who's ever been to New Orleans will tell you, the people there were proud of declaring that they were their own special thing, their own special place. "This isn't America," someone told me when I was there two months ago, "this is *New Orleans*." He meant it, too.

The key to the civil-rights movement, Martin Luther King Jr. used to say, wasn't to change the bedrock racial attitudes of the Deep South. That, he knew, was a glacial undertaking. The South, like New Orleans, thought of itself as not quite America. The trick, then, was to remind people in the North and West that the South *was* America, and still a dysfunctional place in need of federal (read: northern) intervention. It was a brilliant piece of political flattery. The smug North, preening with moral vanity, lorded it over the Deep South for years, until racial tensions erupted in such advanced, progressive cities as New York, Boston, and Los Angeles—and suddenly the South didn't seem so weird and backward anymore. Even today, cities and neighborhoods in the North and West seem much more segregated than, say, Birmingham or Jackson.

Just so, I think, with natural disasters. I live in Los Angeles, by the beach. So I don't worry about the yearly fires that rage through the parched canyons, sweeping away houses and schools and whole families, and I don't worry about hillsides turning to mud as they do after the January rains, avalanching down on entire neighborhoods. But I do worry about the earth suddenly shaking with violence in a place where it hasn't really shaken before—a new fault line, perhaps, or an old one long dormant—underneath something big and dangerous, or maybe just suddenly shaking *everywhere at once*, like it did in 1994, only just a bit worse and for just a little longer, until power lines and sewer pipes

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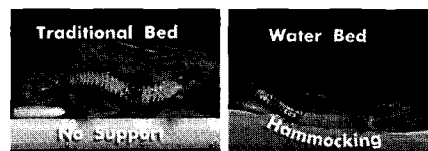
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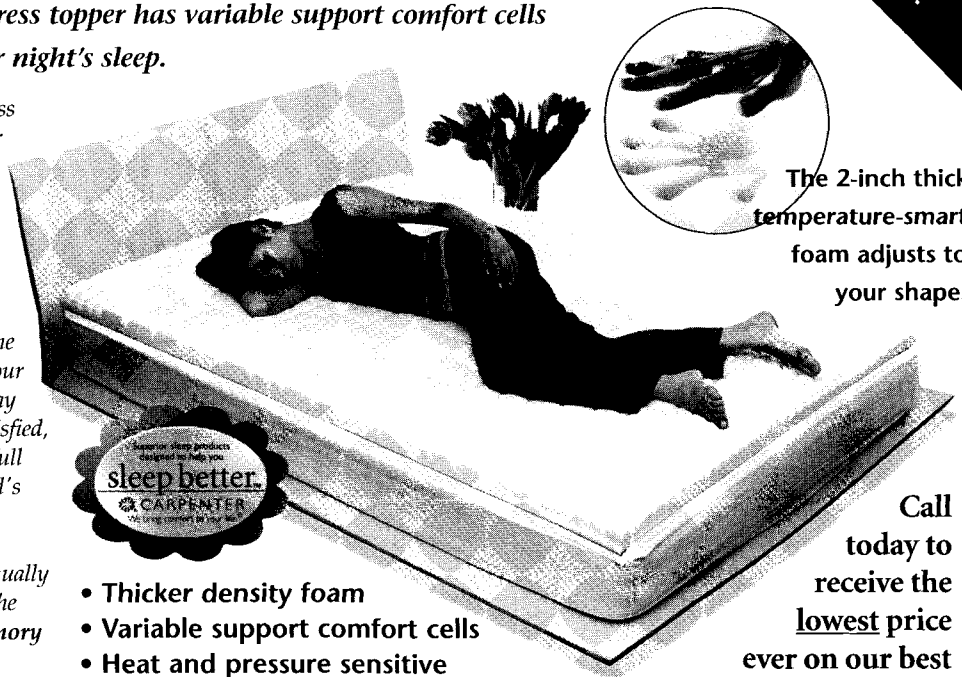
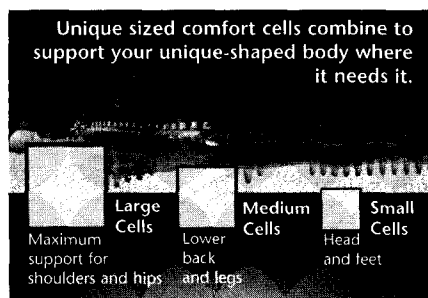
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and freeways are a tangle of rubble and metal and bodies. Then, the images of wooden shacks floating away on Lake Pontchartrain won't seem so remote or exotic, and the stories of unprepared thousands searching for food and water will be grimly familiar. I'll be glad for my disaster supplies—water and canned food for 72 hours at least, matches, disinfectant, flashlights and batteries, blankets, rain ponchos, an emergency radio, a first-aid kit, I'm still thinking about the gun issue—but I'll still be wondering when the feds are going to dig me out. Because one of the promises we make to each other—to Americans, all of us, crazy old aunts and all—is that when disaster strikes, we'll do what we can to take care of each other. And the counter-promise is: First, we'll do what we can to take care of ourselves.

I was in New Orleans in July, during Hurricane Dennis and Tropical Storm Cindy, for a conference put on by the Southern Foodways Alliance. It's an organization based out of the University of Mississippi and dedicated to the preservation and continuation of southern food culture. That's the long version. The short version is, we're about biscuits

and grits and heirloom peaches and all of the rest of the delicious things that southerners eat, allowing them to suffer snobbish

Yankee condescension with a gracious, satisfied smile.

We're a loose collection of gluttons from all over the country, and we gather twice a year: once for a serious-ish symposium in Oxford, Miss., on the campus of the university, and once in various towns throughout the South, for what we call a "field trip." It's a field trip only in the sense that locusts or gypsy moths make a field trip. Honestly, what we do is pick a town in the South, descend on it, devour everything that is now or ever was considered food, argue about lard and hominy and the different ways to cook greens, and then lumber home, bellies full and armed with that gracious, satisfied smile so necessary to the southerner away from home.

Part of the mission of the organization—aside from ushering its membership to a collective, massive coronary occlusion—is to document, through film and oral history, the food and folkways of the American South. That's the long version. The short version is, I spent a sultry New Orleans afternoon sitting in the cool of the bar at the Rib Room, one of New Orleans's most venerable drinking spots, listening to Martin Sawyer, the 84-year-old master barman, reminisce about his half-century serving—and inventing—drinks for his grateful customers. The red light on the video camera blinked while he talked about

his craft, his style, his art. As he served up frosty, ice-crust-ed juleps and sweet licorice Sazeracs, each garnished with memory and anecdote, it suddenly occurred to us that, even in a serious drinking town like New Orleans, no one had taken the time to ask its most experienced and respected bartender to share some thoughts for posterity. Except, of course, for the Southern Foodways Alliance. The endless stream of free juleps and Sazeracs was just icing on the cake.

Later that day, after a long nap, about 200 of us assembled at Restaurant August, a smashing place run by the immensely talented John Besh. It was our final dinner of the trip, and time to fulfill the second part of the Southern Foodways mission: to honor and commemorate the people and products that make the South and southern food so exceptional.

I was sitting at a table with Anthony and Gail Uglesich, owners of the late, lamented lunch spot Uglesich's, on Baronne Street, just steps away from the Central Business District. I had enjoyed many, many delicious lunches at Uglesich's over the years—oyster po'boys and bowls of gumbo—and so for me, even after years of Hollywood award shows and celebrity-infested restaurants, it was a big, big deal. It was, to put it simply, an "A" table.

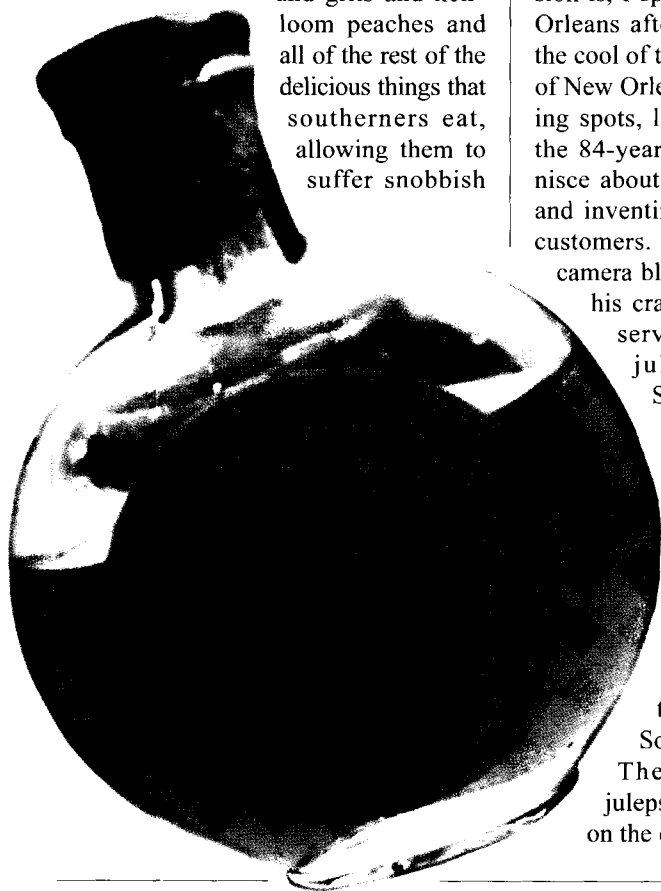
The Uglesichs decided to retire and close the restaurant last spring, suddenly, with little fanfare, and this was the first time since its closing that they had appeared to meet their happy, though wistful, public. As they stood to thunderous applause, tears welled up in Anthony Uglesich's eyes. His wife held his trembling hands in hers, and the two of them, both in their late sixties, acknowledged for the first time the love and devotion they had inspired by 40 years of serving delicious lunches to the hungriest city in the world. We were all a little misty-eyed, to tell you the truth.

"That's what we're all about," the enthusiastic, evangelizing leader of the Southern Foodways Alliance, John T. Edge, whispered in my ear as the applause roared on. "Nobody ever thanks the sandwich-makers and the fry cooks and the guys who get up at four in the morning to make sure everybody gets a hot, delicious lunch. Except us."

I nodded, wiped my eyes with my napkin, and then tucked into Chef Besh's demonically wonderful dessert. Hurricane Cindy had blown way to the east. The weather was hot and humid. The sky was clear.

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**When
disaster
strikes, we'll
do what we
can to take
care of each
other, but
first we'll do
what we
can to take
care of
ourselves.**



■ THE NATION

Hawaii Five-No

The scourge of separatism

ALSTON B. RAMSAY

IF you were gliding through the Honolulu airport at the beginning of your honeymoon, you might smirk upon encountering the T-shirts emblazoned with "The natives are restless." You might even buy one as a souvenir, before heading out to a resort for two weeks of surf and sun, and a generous helping of the convivial Aloha Spirit (which is actually defined by law). Two short weeks later, you'd hop on a plane and go home, with fond memories. It's unlikely you would have paid any attention to local politics. But if you had, you would have a far different impression of Hawaii than that afforded by sunset luaus and ivory beaches: The natives in Hawaii really are restless, and the Aloha Spirit—the omnipresent call to "emote good feelings to others"—has atrophied beneath a furious debate over the future of Hawaii's extensive network of race-exclusive programs.

"The perception is that Hawaii is something you win on an afternoon game show," says Sam Slom, a prominent businessman and one of only five Republicans in Hawaii's state senate. The reality, he explains, is far different: "A growing number of people here . . . have become anti-American." He is referring to the Hawaiian separatist movement, which used to be a fringe element of Hawaiian society, but has during the past few decades become so mainstream that the state's two Democratic senators and Republican governor are now pushing a bill through Congress that will establish a race-based governing entity for native Hawaiians. ("Native" in this context may be a misnomer, since the proposed government would be allowed to choose its own definition.) U.S. senator Daniel Akaka, the bill's author, has acknowledged that this native entity could even-

tually secede, taking some of Hawaii's land with it.

The Akaka bill is just the latest battle in a long Hawaiian war over multiculturalism, race entitlements, and the American way. When Hawaii joined the Union in 1959, statehood was very popular: An astounding 94 percent voted in favor. "We were so proud to be Americans," says Slom. "We had worked so hard for statehood because we had to prove to Congress that we weren't a bunch of savages out here." But in the years since, multiculturalism arrived, and with it, the Hawaiian-rights movement: "This is an incredible culture, but it's been taken over and radicalized." These days, the government won't even acknowledge Statehood Day, which used to be a raucous celebration, because it might prove too divisive. Slom was the sole member of the legislature to vote against a resolution supporting the Akaka bill.

"People think they're entitled to something taken from their ancestors ages ago," says Malia Zimmerman, Hawaii's most prominent conservative journalist. In reality, it's not even clear that anything was taken from ordinary native Hawaiians, since the monarchy owned and controlled most of the land. But this hasn't stopped the Akaka bill's proponents from casting the debate in stark reparation terms: Native-exclusive programs are a debt the U.S. owes to Hawaiians—though details of the alleged past transgressions are scant, or exaggerated—and without the bill, all native-only programs will be in danger. There is some validity to this last assertion. In 2000, the Supreme Court ruled that native-only voting restrictions for the board of a quasi-independent state agency, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), were illegal. (OHA was conceived to benefit natives.) Just a few weeks ago, the Ninth Circuit Court, not exactly a bulwark of conservative thought, struck down a native-only admission policy at Kamehameha Schools. In response, over 20,000 Hawaiians took to the streets to protest, armed with hula skirts, pictures of deposed queen Liliuokalani, and the bright red T-shirts of the independence movement. They weren't the only ones who were upset. Gov. Linda Lingle said that "regardless of the legal basis of [the Kamehameha] decision, this is not a just decision."

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George Will said it best: "It is simply the case that *National Review* is the most consequential journal of opinion ever." It has been so, it remains so, and we at the National Review Institute are confident that *NR* will continue to be so for the next 50 years.

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These attitudes stoke the fires of the Akaka-bill movement. State attorney general Mark Bennett—like Lingle, a Republican—continues to argue that 40,000 natives living on lands held in trust by the federal government could lose their homes if Akaka's legislation isn't enacted. Lingle and Bennett reserve their harshest condemnation for those opposed to the bill on principle, accusing them of engaging in "baseless speculation," and making "specious claims" and "very wild arguments."

Slom and Zimmerman have weathered this storm. They're largely responsible for bringing the Akaka bill to the attention of the general Hawaiian public; until the past few weeks, it had remained a stealth issue of interest chiefly to the bill's backers. "When you're the only one standing up, you're a contrarian or a racist or a gadfly," Slom says. "Nobody likes to be called a racist, nobody wants to be called insensitive. It allows these things like separatist movements . . . to expand."

The pro-Akaka forces also have a wealthy state agency on their side: the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, established in 1978, which now has over \$300 million in assets and an annual budget around \$30 million. What exactly does this entity—perhaps the country's largest diversity bureaucracy—do to help natives? Aside from protecting "Native Hawaiian rights and entitlements," and safeguarding "endangered traditions, practices and rights," one of its main goals is creating "a unified Hawaiian nation" by 2007. To this end, OHA has paid the powerhouse lobbying firm Patton Boggs \$400,000 to push the bill in Congress.

The agency is notoriously wasteful. A state audit earlier this year found that the "OHA has shown little improvement in its ability to serve Hawaiians since our last audit in 2001. . . . The Board of Trustees still has not provided the State with a comprehensive master plan for bettering the conditions of native Hawaiians and Hawaiians. . . . OHA is still grappling with the effects of poorly planned reorganizations. . . . OHA lacks basic policies and procedures to guide the actions of its staff, and its organizational charts and functional statements are inconsistent. . . . OHA's

casual administration of its finances does not demonstrate respect for its fiduciary duty to all Hawaiians. . . . Certain protocol and trustee expenditures appear questionable." There have, however, been a few improvements: Unlike the last audit, this one did not find any trustees giving themselves interest-free loans, or buying dentures with OHA money.

The absurdities of the OHA are not incidental to the native-rights debate: They are in fact fundamental to it, for they represent a small-scale model of what the new governing entity could become. There will be the same entrenched self-interests, wielding a tremendous budget, but what little oversight there is now will be removed. And of course, since the OHA has spearheaded the independent-government movement, and has connections with the whole

native-rights community, you can bet that its administrators will have the inside track on positions in the new government.

There is, naturally, an electoral element to all this: Lingle is the state's first Republican governor in 40 years, and is thought to be angling to replace one of the state's Democratic senators upon retirement (both are in their eighties). If the Akaka bill can help woo Hawaii, long a Democratic stronghold, into the GOP's camp, then the national party will surely support her candidacy. (Lingle already has the ear of the president: She campaigned relentlessly for him last year, delivered a speech at the national convention, and was the only GOP governor invited to the final presidential debate.)

Last year Republicans made state-level inroads across the nation, but in Hawaii the party lost five seats in the state house and gained nothing in the senate. Lingle's agenda has come to a grinding halt this year, and about the only campaign promise she's keeping these days is the one about supporting the Akaka bill. She's pinned much of her own political future on its success. If the Akaka bill doesn't pass muster in D.C., it will mark another failure for Lingle. If it does pass Congress, and the new government is a surprising success, it will remain a Democratic initiative pushed through by Democratic senators. There's one other likely outcome: If the Akaka bill becomes law, and Hawaii descends into racial chaos, Lingle will have to shoulder part of the blame not just for failing to prevent the measure, but for actively lobbying on its behalf. "She's putting a huge knife into the Republican party," Zimmerman says, and the political fallout could set the GOP back even further in Hawaii.

The Akaka bill is a terrible piece of legislation. Yet even the worst laws often have a silver lining: Like a carefully performed biopsy, they reveal something about our society that we couldn't see before. What the Akaka bill shows, unfortunately, is how far down the "diversity" road we've traveled, and how easy it is for radical activists—alleging spurious grievances—to advance an ill-conceived agenda.

NR



Gov. Linda Lingle

ROMAN GEIN

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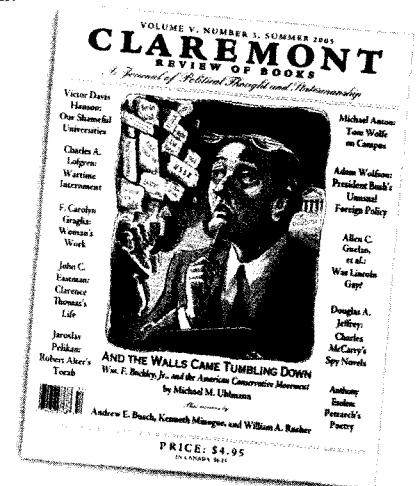
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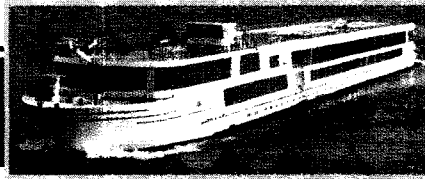
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Rhine River Charter

WITH MICHAEL NOVAK, CAL THOMAS, MONA CHAREN, JOHN O'NEILL,
KATE O'BEIRNE, RICH LOWRY, and JAY NORDLINGER



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RÜDESHEIM, HEIDELBERG, MANNHEIM, STRASBOURG, AND BASEL**

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Featuring a line-up of all-star conservative speakers, and a glorious four-country Rhine River itinerary—Amsterdam in The Netherlands; Düsseldorf, Cologne, Koblenz, Rüdesheim, Mainz, Mannheim, and Gernsheim in Germany; Strasbourg in France; and Basel in Switzerland—this special trip (which includes two days “pre-cruise” in Amsterdam!) will take place May 4-13, 2006, aboard Viking River Cruises' new and luxurious 5-star *Helvetia II*.

You must join us for this thrilling charter trip—our NR-only contingent of congenial conservatives will enjoy a fabulous itinerary and inclusive excursions—a package that Viking River Cruises *specially* designed for us! We're certain this will be another intimate NR experience (the luxurious *Helvetia II*, which will launch in April, 2006, holds just 200 people) that you *won't* want to miss.

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Surely, NR's 18th(!) cruise will be second to none. The itinerary alone is worth the trip:

AMSTERDAM This 800-year-old city is renowned for its magnificent museums, colorful gardens, glorious architecture, and endless lattice of canals. During our pre-cruise stay, we'll enjoy a special tour of the famous Keukenhof/Aalsmeer flower auction.

DÜSSELDORF This major arts center, home to numerous theaters, museums, and the German Opera House, is also a shopper's paradise (the Königsallee features many classy shops and pavement cafés). Our guided city tour will include a visit to Benrath Palace, with its stunning rococo interior and massive, beautiful gardens.

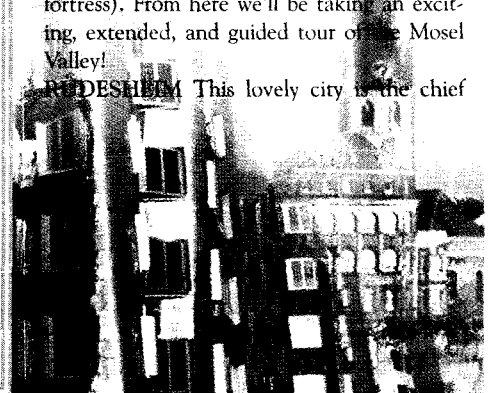
COLOGNE An intriguing mix of old and new, Cologne's Roman heritage is evident from the city's layout and many ancient ruins. Its modern plazas and the Hohe-Strasse, a pedestrian-only retail zone, provide ample shopping, lively bars and enticing restaurants. On our city tour, we'll visit the city's famous 14th century gothic Dom Cathedral (as well as a “Brauhaus” visit!).

KOBLENZ Capturing traditional German charm, this city of cobblestone streets, ancient market squares, and medieval churches is home to the Ehrenbreitstein (Europe's oldest fortress). From here we'll be taking an exciting, extended, and guided tour of the Mosel Valley!

RÜDESHEIM This lovely city is the chief

8/FREE TOURS, INCLUDING HEIDELBERG & MOSEL VALLEY

DAY/DATE	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART	SPECIAL EVENT
Thur/May 4	Amsterdam	Arrive morning		Transfer to hotel
Fri/May 5	Amsterdam			Keukenhof/Aalsmeer flower auction tour
Sat/May 6	Amsterdam		6:30pm	Afternoon panel session Evening cocktail reception
Sun/May 7	Düsseldorf	11:00am	(overnight)	Morning panel session City tour/Benrath Palace
Mon/May 8	Düsseldorf Cologne	9:00am	4:30am 10:00pm	City Walk/Cathedral and Brauhaus Tour Late-night Smoker
Tue/May 9	Koblenz	6:00am	2:00pm	Mosel Valley excursion Afternoon panel session Evening cocktail reception
	Rüdesheim	7:30pm	(overnight)	Late-evening wine tasting
Wed/May 10	Rüdesheim Mainz	8:30am	6:00am 12:00 noon	Gutenberg museum and City walking tour
	Gernsheim Mannheim	2:30pm (drop off) 6:00pm	(overnight)	Heidelberg excursion
Thur/May 11	Mannheim Strasbourg	2:00pm	2:00am (overnight)	Morning panel session City tour Late-night smoker
Fri/May 12	Strasbourg		1:00pm	Alsace/Vosges excursion Afternoon panel session Evening cocktail party
Sat/May 13	Basel	12:00 midnight (arrive)		

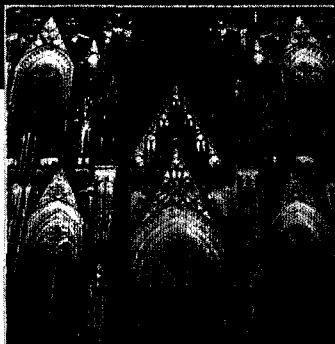


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center of the Rhine wine industry. Its famed Drosselgasse, a tavern-lined, cobblestone street, attracts locals and visitors alike. Half-timbered medieval houses, narrow streets, and old inns give the town the flavor of the Middle Ages.

MAINZ This ancient Roman city and important Middle Ages' trade center is

famous as the home to printing pioneer Johannes Gutenberg. NR's contingent will be visiting the Gutenberg Museum, as part of a City Walking tour. St. Stephen's Cathedral, which features Chagall's glorious stained-glass windows, is a must-see!

GERNSHEIM From this charming port we'll take an NR group tour to Heidelberg, famous for its esteemed university, charming Old Town, and awesome castle.

MANNHEIM Renowned for its classical "chessboard" layout dating from the 17th century, Mannheim—featuring many elegant shops, cafés, and restaurants—is a haven for culture and the arts. You'll find the baroque Mannheim Residence, with its ornamental stucco knights' hall, of special interest.

STRASBOURG This delightful border city exhibits both French and German influences. The old streets of "Petit France"—we'll saunter down them on the NR guided City Walk tour—with wooden houses and picturesque canals seem to make time stand still. We'll stay in this very special place overnight, with our second "day" featuring an NR excursion to delightful Alsace and Vosges.

BASEL Our last port is located at the point where French, German and Swiss borders meet, historic Basel, with cobblestone streets, 18th century buildings and three surviving medieval gates, is the gateway to the Swiss Rhineland.

That phenomenal cruise will be made all the better by the many "extras" that are part of an NR experience: The *National Review* 2006 *Rhine River Charter Cruise* will feature six seminar sessions (each two hours!) where our guest speakers and editors candidly discuss today's most important issues; three classy cocktail receptions and two delightful "smokers" featuring H. Upmann cigars (picture yourself on the Sun Deck, a delightful drink in hand, surrounded by new-found friends, as the luxurious *Helvetia II* gently sails past the most charming villages and vistas you will ever see, in the company of friends old and new!); plus intimate dining on two nights with our editors and guest speakers!

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Please fill out application completely and mail with deposit check or fax with credit-card information. One application per cabin. If you want more than one cabin, make copies of this application. For questions call The Cruise Authority at 800-707-1634.

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Name #2 (full legal name) + informal name	Birthdate	Shirt Size (S-XXL)
Name #2 Citizenship	Passport Number	Expiration Date
Name #3 (full legal name) + informal name	Birthdate	Shirt Size (S-XXL)
Name #3 Citizenship	Passport Number	Expiration Date
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City	State	ZIP
()		
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Payment

A deposit of \$2,500 **per cabin** is due with this application. If paid by credit card, balance will be charged to same card on February 3, 2006 unless otherwise directed. If application is received after February 6, 2006, the full amount of cruise will be charged. Cabins and categories are available on a first come, first served basis.

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☐ Charge to: AmEx ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover

Card #

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PRIOR to December 5, 2005 you will be charged \$100 per person. FROM December 5, 2005-February 3, 2006, you will be charged \$500 per person. AFTER February 3, 2006, the penalty is 100% of cruise/package.

Air Travel

There are two options for booking air transportation for this cruise package.

OPTION 1: You may book your own air via whichever means you choose. Most importantly, plan to depart the U.S. on Wednesday, May 3rd for a Thursday, May 4th arrival into Amsterdam. Transfers from the airport to our hotel are included in the cruise price, provided that The Cruise Authority is notified of your flight information. Return flights should be scheduled from Basel, Switzerland any time on the morning of Saturday, May 13th. Transfers will be provided from the riverboat to the Basel airport. Should you elect to schedule your return air from Zurich, Switzerland note that there is train service, and it is approximately 50 miles from Basel. Should you wish to utilize frequent flyer miles, note that these seats typically book up months in advance.

OPTION 2: The Cruise Authority will work with you to make all necessary arrangements for coach, business or first class air pertaining to this cruise. Contact Danet Trafton at dtrafton@the-cruise-authority.com (or call 1-800-707-1634) for a quote.

Pre- or Post-Cruise Customization

This *National Review* cruise package includes 2 nights in Amsterdam (May 4th & 5th) prior to the departure date of the riverboat on May 6th. Should you wish to arrive into Europe prior to this package, or extend your stay at the completion of the cruise, please contact our travel specialists: Nancy Laudenschlager, nancy@the-cruise-authority.com, or Danet Trafton, dtrafton@the-cruise-authority.com.

Cruise

(All rates are per person, double occupancy, and include all port charges and taxes, all gratuities, meals, entertainment, and *National Review* activities. Failure to appear for embarkation for any reason constitutes a cancellation subject to full penalties. Personal items not included.)

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II. AIR PACKAGE

☐ Please quote air from Class of Service: ☐ Coach ☐ Business Class ☐ First Class

☐ We will provide our own roundtrip air, but would like to arrange complimentary transfers (Plan to arrive in Amsterdam on May 4, 2006, and to depart after 12:00 NOON from Basel, Switzerland on May 13, 2006).

☐ I/We will reach the Amsterdam Marriott on our own.

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V. PRE- AND POST-CRUISE PACKAGES

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VI. MEDICAL SITUATIONS

Are there any medical situations we should know about?

VII. SPECIAL EVENTS

Are there any special events we should know about?

Important!

Everyone cruising will be required to bring either a valid passport. Failure to do so may result in being denied boarding of your flight and the *Helvetia II*.

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Reporting While Wrong

The *New York Times* peddles more 'driving while black' malarkey

HEATHER MAC DONALD

THE *New York Times*'s bad faith regarding the police has reached a new low. On August 24, a front-page article claimed that the Justice Department had tried to suppress damning evidence of racial profiling by the nation's police forces. In fact, it is the *Times* that is suppressing evidence.

For years, activists have argued that some drivers face a heightened risk of being stopped by bigoted cops. David Harris, a University of Toledo law professor and ubiquitous police critic, provided a classic statement of the "Driving While Black" conceit in 1999: "Anyone who is African-American is automatically suspect during every drive to work, the store, or a friend's house." Owing to this "automatic suspicion," Harris posited in his 2002 book, *Profiles in Injustice*, "pretextual stops will be used against African-Americans and Hispanics . . . out of proportion to their numbers in the driving population."

The "Driving While Black" belief is pervasive, powerful, and false. According to a survey of 80,000 civilians conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (an arm of the Justice Department) in 2002, an identical proportion of white, black, and Hispanic drivers—9 percent—were stopped by the police in the previous year. And the stop rate for blacks was lower during the day, when officers can more readily determine a driver's race, than at night. These results demolish the claim that minorities are disproportionately subject to "pretextual stops."

Clearly, these findings should be news of a high order—so that must be why the

Heather Mac Donald is a contributing editor to the Manhattan Institute's *City Journal*.

Times buried them in paragraph 11 of its front-page story (and omitted the day-night disparity entirely). But not only did the *Times* conceal the study's import, it also had the temerity to spin the survey as *confirming* the racial-profiling myth. Indeed, the BJS study will "add grist to the debate over using racial and ethnic data in law enforcement," the newspaper asserted, because it provided evidence of "the aggressive police treatment of black and Hispanic drivers."

What is this evidence for racist policing, in the paper's view? The *Times* bases its charge on two findings from the survey: According to driver self-reports, blacks and Hispanics were more likely to have their persons or cars searched than white drivers, and were more likely to be subjected to the threat or use of force by the officer who stopped them. The survey defines force as pushing, grabbing, or hitting; a typical force incident, characterized by the survey respondent as "excessive," consisted of an officer grabbing the respondent by the arm as he was fleeing the scene and pushing him against his car. Specifically, black drivers said that they or their cars were searched 10.2 percent of the time following a stop, Hispanic drivers 11.4 percent of the time, and white drivers 3.5 percent of the time. As for police threats or use of force, 2.4 percent of Hispanic drivers, 2.7 percent of black drivers, and 0.8 percent of white drivers claimed that force had been threatened or used against them.

None of these findings establishes prejudicial treatment of minorities. The *Times*, for instance, does not reveal that blacks and Hispanics were far more likely to be *arrested* following a stop: Blacks were 11 percent of all stopped drivers, but 24 percent of all arrested drivers; Hispanics, 9.5 percent of all stopped drivers, but 18.4 percent of all arrested drivers; and whites, 76.5 percent of all stopped drivers, but 58 percent of arrested drivers. The higher black and Hispanic arrest rates undoubtedly result from their higher crime rates. The national black murder rate, for example, is seven times higher than that of all other races combined, and the black robbery rate eight times higher. Though the FBI does not keep national crime data on Hispanics, local police statistics usually put the Hispanic crime rate between the black

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and white crime rates. These differential crime rates mean that when the police run a computer search on black and Hispanic drivers following a stop, they are far more likely to turn up outstanding arrest warrants than for white drivers.

These higher arrest rates in turn naturally result in higher search rates: Officers routinely search civilians incident to an arrest. Moreover, the higher crime rates among blacks and Hispanics mean a greater likelihood that evidence of a crime, such as weapons or drugs, may be in plain view, thereby triggering an arrest and a search.

The higher incidence of police threats or use of force against blacks and Hispanics—assuming the self-reports are accurate—is also more likely to result from driver conduct than from police bias. Criminology studies have long found that the greatest predictor of police behavior is civilian behavior. Threaten or challenge an officer and you are likely to be challenged back. The 2002 BJS survey concluded that persons who provoked the police were significantly more likely to experience the threat or use of force by the officer than persons who did not. Thus, 24 percent of persons involved in a police force incident admitted to cursing at, insulting, or threatening the officer. The number of people who *actually* engaged in such behavior is probably higher still.

Speculatively speaking, it is likely that a greater percentage of blacks and Hispanics challenged or threatened a police officer than did whites. Why? Because for the last decade and a half, blacks and Hispanics have been fed a steady diet of police-racism stories. They have been told again and again that if an officer stops them, it is because of their race, not their conduct. Police officers have come to expect that the first words out of a black driver's mouth following a traffic stop will be, "You only stopped me because I'm black." The chance that such an attitude will escalate into more hostile behavior is much greater than zero. In addition, the differential crime rates mean that a higher proportion of black and Hispanic drivers will have a crime in their past that could lead them to resist the officer making the stop.

The BJS authors explicitly disavowed the possibility of using the survey data to conclude that driver race, rather than con-

duct, resulted in different search or force rates. The *Times*, however, shows no such reluctance. After belatedly acknowledging the identical stop rates among different racial and ethnic groups, the paper hastens to add that "what happened once the police made a stop differed markedly depending on race and ethnicity." The *Times* then goes on to posit a Bush administration cover-up of these allegedly compromising findings. According to the *Times's* narrative, political appointees in the Justice Department demoted the Bureau of Justice Statistics director, Lawrence Greenfeld, after he refused to delete references to the differential search and force rates from a press release announcing the 2002 survey. And in a further manifestation of political meddling, per the paper, the Justice Department opted not to issue the contested press release at all, but simply posted the report online—as it has done for nearly 70 percent of the reports released in 2004 and 2005. That was another detail not disclosed in the *Times's* story.

So what? A press release that focused on the search and arrest rates would be seriously misleading. Yet the *Times's* fake scoop produced the usual reaction: eager mimicry. Within 24 hours, news outlets ranging from National Public Radio to the *St. Petersburg Times* had reproduced the story. One career cop-basher, Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, called for a congressional investigation into the alleged "cover-up." And the NAACP claimed that the study confirmed the "truth about racial profiling."

The notion that the police target blacks and Hispanics because of their skin color has damaged urban life. Thanks to racial-data-collection mandates, every officer knows that if he has "too many" interactions with minority citizens—including responding to crime calls or preventing a mugging—he could face a bias charge. Some officers will decide that it's wiser for their careers not to fight crime aggressively, leaving law-abiding inner-city residents at the mercy of thugs. The drumbeat against the cops increases the hostility against them, poisoning the trust needed for the most effective police work. The *New York Times's* endless crusade against phantom police racism ensures that the poorest neighborhoods will continue to be held back by fear and violence. **NR**

■ EUROPE

Overcoming Brezhnev

In Germany, that is

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

THE elections to be held in Germany on September 18 will act as a sizable pebble spreading ripples far and wide across the pond of world politics. The incumbent chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, a social democrat in power since 1998, faces Angela Merkel, a conservative. Polls in the run-up have given Merkel a lead between ten and fourteen points, but Schroeder is an experienced and unscrupulous campaigner who stops at nothing. *Der Spiegel*, the leading German magazine, has called him "the Great Manipulator." Again according to polls, a third of the electorate will make up its mind only at the last minute.

The winner faces the Herculean task of pulling Germany out of its current mess. The country is experiencing something comparable to the stagnation that Leonid Brezhnev imposed on the Soviet Union for no real purpose except to keep the system going for its own sake. Germany has overtaken the United States as an exporter; its economic troubles derive from bad law and regulation, and can therefore be remedied by someone with the right political will and skill.

Fear of what change might entail is the governing motive for stagnation. Such fear is grounded in the perceptions Germans have of each other, and that others have of them. Every German knows in his bones that people of other nationalities have only to look at him in order to think Hitler. The senior civil servant in the Interior Ministry once said to me that the German people will have to sit in sackcloth and ashes for the next 500 years. (A visit to the concentration camp

Many of Mr. Pryce-Jones's books, both fiction and nonfiction, touch on Germany. The latest is a novel, *Safe Houses* (forthcoming).

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of Buchenwald or Dachau is a hallucinatory experience, though, because busloads of German pensioners are usually on excursion there, chatting and laughing as they tour a site preserved for the very different purpose of reminding them of national shame.)

The attitude of the German elite remains one of clinging to postwar achievements out of fundamental mistrust of the people. Chancellors, and above all Helmut Kohl, have argued that membership in the European Union is the only way to tie down German expansionism. Egon Bahr, one of the most influential of postwar German foreign-policy makers, once warned me that Germany might well "go ape again." *Prominenten* of this sort make a point of apologizing for the past, laying wreaths and painfully prostrating themselves before memorials to Nazi victims. An ill-judged remark about anything to do with the war immediately ruins the career of anyone in public life. Nobody knew quite what to make of Schroeder's search for the grave in Romania of his father, a Wehrmacht soldier killed on the eastern front.

Many Germans naturally understand why the wartime Allies had to devastate their country as a prelude to liberating it. Sixty years of reconstruction have indeed been impressive. Outwardly, Germany looks as important and solid as it ought to be. City centers are bright and beautiful. Historic buildings like the Frauenkirche in Dresden, the Berlin parliament, and Frederick the Great's palace in the same city take their place once more in the landscape. The famous German respect for order is at work.

But quite as many Germans consider that they are victims more than victimizers. In general, intellectuals and artists have generated a sense of self-pity that corrodes the society. In this view, the ending of Nazism led to consequences quite as horrendous as Nazism itself, for instance the Hamburg and Dresden firestorms, the loss of Prussia, or the Soviet occupation of East Germany—all seen as Allied complicity in crimes morally equivalent to Nazism. In a recent best-seller, Uwe Timm tells the story of the brother he never really knew, killed in the SS somewhere in the east, with the clearly sympathetic implication that here was an unfortunate young man caught up in a

process quite beyond his understanding. Similarly, refugees from Prussia publish well-received memoirs with the theme that their undoubted sufferings were gratuitous rather than the inevitable penalty to be paid for Nazism.

Successive chancellors resorted to welfare as a treatment for the self-pity in the national bloodstream. Bismarck invented the welfare state, and his successors have carried benefits and pensions and the granting of workers' rights to extraordinary lengths. This may have been valid in the early postwar years, but latterly the more people have received the more they



Angela Merkel

have demanded. Germany is the most striking example yet of a rich country whose wealth is being used to make it unviable.

The figures come as a shock. Labor costs are about half as much again as those in the United States, with the result that about 5 million workers—some 12 percent of the workforce—are unemployed. To escape prohibitive costs, major companies such as Siemens and the truck-maker MAN have relocated to other countries, and even German banks, the backbone of the economy, have threatened to do the same.

On top of everything, the reputed economic success of the former East Germany was another Communist lie; its 17 million people have had to be bailed out in all respects. Reunification of the country has involved the transfer to the east of some \$70 billion every year for

the past 15 years—in the grimmer areas, unemployment is so high that the population dwindles and leaves. Mark Steyn has publicized the startling fact that one town had to install a smaller sewage system as there were no longer enough people to ensure the flushing of the main drains. Social-security outlays now exceed contributions from workers. The demographic deficit means that already there are not enough workers to pay the pensions of those who are retired. The national deficit is well above the limit set by the EU, and the economy stopped growing in 2002. *The Economist* was the first to call Germany "the sick man of Europe."

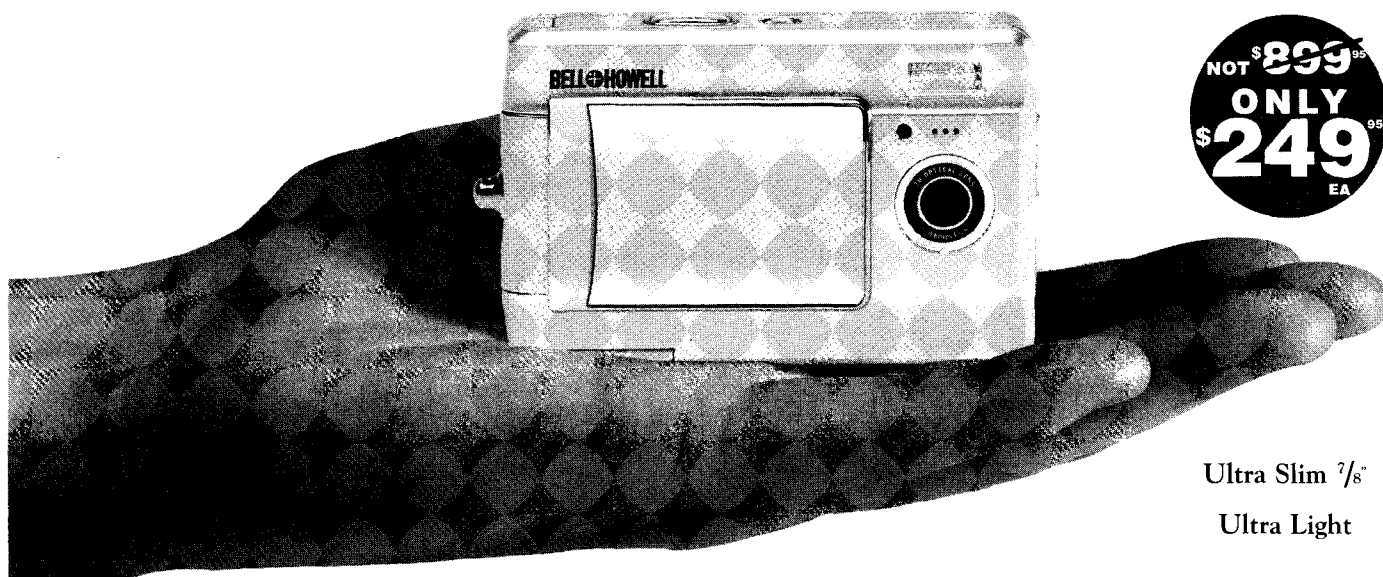
Self-pity prospers mightily in these circumstances, and as is only to be expected, it has also mutated into aggression, its natural counterpart. On the left, Schroeder's longtime rival, Oskar Lafontaine, has teamed up with the former East Germany Communist party, and will no doubt win votes on a platform that Brezhnev himself would applaud. On the right, neo-Nazis have done well in recent regional elections, taking about a quarter of the votes in a couple of former East German *Länder*.

Schroeder brandishes a plan, known as Agenda 2010, which he claims is a blueprint for future economic and political success, but his past attempts at even the simplest reforms have alienated his party and come to nothing. His is a program institutionalizing self-pity and immobilizing the country. Playing to the gallery, furthermore, he joined with French president Chirac in opposing the United States over Iraq policy, and hopes to pick up more demagogic popularity by declaring that the Iraq campaign is a proven failure and that Iran must not be forced to abandon its nuclear ambitions. In an example of German humor at its most hearty, a float along a street in Düsseldorf had an effigy of Uncle Sam with Angela Merkel coming out of its behind. By general consent, however, Schroeder did not get the better of her in a crucial television debate.

The intellectual and artistic elite loathe and mock Angela Merkel. True, her expression is usually flat, her hair is awkwardly cut, and for a 51-year-old she is a bit of a frump. Her husband, a distinguished professor of chemistry, stays in the background, and she has no children (which has prompted Schroeder's wife to accuse her of being unable to speak for

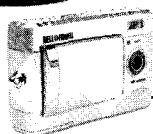
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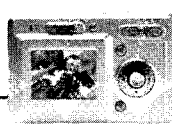
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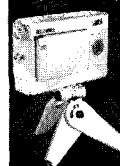
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women). But the real reproach of the leftists is that she isn't one of them as she ought to be, because her father was a Lutheran pastor who emigrated with his family to East Germany in 1954. At that date, such a move has ideology stamped all over it.

The young Angela grew up under Communism and joined its youth movement. She has a story about the Soviets stealing her bicycle. The Stasi secret-police records show that she and her father both refused to become informers. A dissertation on carbohydrates earned her a doctorate at the Berlin Academy of Sciences. When the Wall fell, Chancellor Kohl spotted her as an easterner willing and able to transform straightaway into a westerner. Calling her *Mädchen*, he promoted her, but when he was caught in a scandal about illicit party funding, his Little Girl was the one who forced him out of politics and took over the party with the sort of ruthlessness she might have learned from the Communists. Self-pity is not her mode.

Not a natural campaigner, she talks technicalities about adjusting fiscal and social policies. Designed to make sure that there would never be another Hitler, the German form of proportional representation diffuses power, obliging even victorious parties to form coalitions that often cause nothing but deadlock. Single-mindedness of purpose, and great courage, are the prerequisites for overcoming the various inbuilt political and emotional obstacles to reform and change. Without some national form of perestroika, however, the whole German system threatens to implode as surely as Brezhnev's once did.

NR

■ R.I.P.

The Way Jude Worked

Remembering Wanniski

RICHARD BROOKHISER

JUDE WANNISKI (1936–2005) was the indefatigable cheerleader of supply-side economics. Arthur Laffer and Robert Mundell invented the theory, and Robert Bartley, Irving Kristol, and Robert Novak championed it. But Wanniski had the most brio.

I got in on the ground floor of the supply-side revolution about as early as someone who was not a colleague of Wanniski's at the *Wall Street Journal* could. In 1978 a friend of mine from college was managing the New Jersey senatorial campaign of Jeffrey Bell. Bell was challenging the liberal incumbent Clifford Case in the Republican primary; if he won he would face former New York Knick Bill Bradley in the election. It was the glad confident morning of the supply-side school: Supply-siders knew the answer to all the world's problems, and the world was just about to find out. The campaign's office had a stack of Jude Wanniski's new book, *The Way the World Works*, which they consulted the way the Jehovah's Witnesses read *The Watchtower*.

Wanniski's book was important to me, as it was to the whole conservative movement in the late Seventies. He wrote in clear journalist's English that deprived economics of its terrors. The economic theory that underlay the supply-side school was simple, and commonsensical: At some point tax rates become so onerous that they generate diminishing returns. Arthur Laffer had sketched a graph shaped like a croquet wicket on a cocktail napkin to describe the interplay of tax rates and revenue. In Jimmy Carter's America, we seemed clearly to be on the downward prong.

Wanniski's insight, in *The Way the World Works*, was to broaden the theo-

ry beyond economics. High taxes throttled energy, intellect, and the human spirit, as well as business and government. Politically, his message was hopeful: The discontents of civilization were not caused only (or maybe not caused at all) by cultural dysfunction or human cussedness. Bad policies made for bad lives; good ones would benefit everybody. His message of hope seemed specifically targeted at conservative Republicans, whose historic concern for balanced budgets had trapped them into dour naysaying. If Republicans lowered tax rates, the resulting influx of revenues would relieve them of the necessity of wrangling over every budget line item. The GOP could reach out to traditional Democrats, and minorities, for the rising tide would lift all boats.

If you read *The Way the World Works* closely, sunspots appeared. Wanniski attributed the crash of 1929, and the ensuing Depression, to tariff policy, which, even if true, seemed petty: How could such a debacle have only one cause? His view of human history was weirdly narrow. Everything in Europe between the Roman emperor Commodus, a tax raiser, and the French emperor Napoleon, a tax cutter, was a featureless sump. But in 1978 conservatives wanted to win elections for a change, and were in no mood to quibble. Bell beat Case, but lost to Bradley. Supply-siders confidently predicted that the young Republican congressman Jack Kemp would win the presidential nomination, and the White House, in 1980. He didn't, because an old former governor, Ronald Reagan, took over the supply-side message. Supply-siders always said Reagan converted because of his long-ago grounding in pre-Keynesian economics at Eureka College, and perhaps they were right. But Reagan knew a good political pitch, and one that fit his own expansive personality.

I met Wanniski for the first time when he came to post-editorial drinks in the winter of 1980–81, between Reagan's victory and his inauguration. The man was like his book. He had a genial manner and a rather high, keening voice. He radiated sweetness, innocence, and self-assurance in equal portions. His concern

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just then was how Kemp might spend the time before his own deferred presidency. Wanniski knew just the slot for him: ambassador to the United Nations. Why on earth? we asked. It would be his bully pulpit for converting the world to supply-side economics, Wanniski explained. The Soviet Union? we thought. Cuba? Wanniski was not fazed. "Marxists," he explained, "believe in production." This was not a whimsical remark. Wanniski later told me that his family had been working-class Communists, and that his grandfather's dying wish was that Jude write a book as important as *Das Kapital*. "That's what I've tried to do," he said simply. What a confluence of idealism and ignorance: the desire to change the world, the fecklessness of appropriating Marx as a model.

In office, Ronald Reagan gave the supply-side engine block a few bangs with a lug wrench, as tactical necessity required. But he basically hewed to the doctrine. Politically, it was a great victory for Wanniski and all the supply-siders. Personally, it was the worst thing that could ever have happened to Wanniski. The man who knew how the world worked had changed the world; he foresaw the rest of his life glimmering before him as a series of such successful



Jude Wanniski (1936–2005)

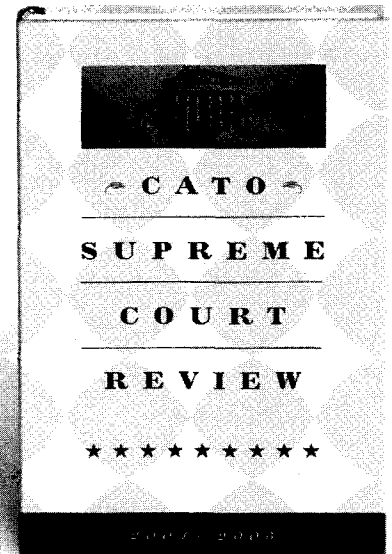
interventions. Self-assurance became grandiosity, and worse.

In 1988 he joined a table of NR editors at the Republican convention in New Orleans. The Quayle pick had just been announced. Wanniski had found a new hero, Mikhail Gorbachev, whom he called Gorby. Why wait for Jack Kemp to convert the Communist world when he might do it directly? As the years passed, Wanniski slid down the great chain of being, seeking ever more dubious acolytes. In 1992 he was hot for Ross Perot who, he told me, was sure to win in a landslide, if the American establishment did not have him assassinated. (Perot did die, politically, but it was by his own daft hand.) Next up was Louis Farrakhan. Wanniski denied that the Nation of Islam warlock was a bigot, and challenged anyone to produce a single anti-Semitic statement of his ("gutter religion" is a compliment?). Wanniski opposed both Iraq wars, as did, and do, other conservatives. His critics wondered darkly whether the Iraqis paid him. If they did, they wasted their money. Returning his phone calls would have been enough. Wanniski's last proximity to almost-power came when Jack Kemp got Bob Dole's nod as running-mate in 1996. Kemp and Wanniski were both autodidacts, but Kemp always had something that Wanniski lacked, a measure of modesty. Hence Wanniski always had Kemp's ear. Wanniski believed he could have turned the election to Dole-Kemp if only Farrakhan had endorsed the ticket.

My last exchange with Wanniski was by e-mail. I had gotten one of his, cc'd *urbi et orbi*, blasting the racism of the Founding Fathers. I was goaded to stick up for Alexander Hamilton, who had written that the "natural faculties" of blacks "are probably as good as ours." Wanniski replied that he was glad to learn it (the old sweetness). Of course, he also had not known what he was talking about—the curse of his later years.

Pundits shoot at the moving targets of events. This can make us irresponsible. But events, and our own judgments, shoot back at us. Over time we can say a lot of foolish things; let us hope that is the extent of it. When we think of Jude Wanniski, we should think of his book—to his credit, no *Das Kapital*. NR

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DARREN GYGI

Bush's Strategy, Assessed

A symposium on the president's novel approach
in the Middle East, and beyond

In both the National Security Strategy and, more dramatically, his second inaugural address, President Bush made the extension of freedom and democracy to other countries the linchpin of U.S. security. It is not mere rhetoric, as it has often been in the past, but considered by the president the practical mechanism by which America can best guarantee its long-term security in the world.

Enough has happened in both Afghanistan and Iraq over the past few years to take stock of this strategy—both its implementation thus far and its future prospects. We asked a symposium of conservative writers what they thought about the strategy: as a practical tool for underpinning our foreign and military policy, and as a conservative ideal.

DAVID FRUM

WOULD Americans be more secure if the world were democratic? The answer can be summed up in two words. One is "India." The other is "Pakistan."

In 1947, the British divided northern India into two countries. Pakistan and India shared a common history (India takes its name from the Indus River—which flows through Pakistan). They had very similar economic systems and legal institutions. Their leading languages, Urdu and Hindi, are virtually identical. But India evolved into a more or less stable democracy; Pakistan did not.

Democratic India has not always been a friend to the United States. Through most of the Cold War, in fact, India aligned itself with the Soviet Union. But even when it was not America's friend, India was a force for regional stability. When extremist movements have appeared, the Indian government has worked to contain and suppress them. Today, India is opening its economy and developing a sustainable strategic partnership with the West.

Pakistan, by contrast, often has proclaimed itself America's friend. Yet few countries on earth have caused more trouble over the past two decades, sponsoring terror, selling nuclear technology, and harboring and promoting extremist versions of Islam.

The problem is not that Pakistan's leaders are hostile to the U.S. To the contrary: Almost all of them have wished to align themselves with America. But without the legitimacy of democratic elections, they have lacked the strength to face down extremists

inside their country. Without parliaments or a free press to answer to, Pakistani leaders have been able to strike corrupt secret deals with the world's most vicious regimes. And with normal politics blocked, dissatisfied Pakistanis have turned to religion to express their grievances—knowing that the mosque was the one institution that the dictator of the day did not control.

It's probably true, as critics of democracy point out, that an election today would bring nasty people to power in Pakistan. But if Pakistan had followed India's democratic course, the nasties would have been marginalized long ago—as they have across the partition line.

Of course we must acknowledge the very real limits on America's reach. But the need for prudence in the means used should not lead one to forget the ultimate goal one is seeking to achieve. America was safer in 1991 than it was in 1971 because of the spread of democracy in Europe, East Asia, and Latin America. And if Americans are to be safer in 2021 than they were in 2001, it will be because democracy has extended its reach through the Arab and Islamic Middle East.

Mr. Frum is a contributing editor to NATIONAL REVIEW.

ADAM GARFINKLE

RHETORIC isn't "just rhetoric." Presidential language has helped change the tone of conversation in the Middle East for the better. But only by digging into that political turf and twisting hard can we make a lasting impression. That means succeeding reasonably in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, and Darfur (because Darfur is ultimately a political, not just a "humanitarian," challenge).

So how are we doing? There have been fairly clean elections in all these places except Sudan, but a self-sustaining liberal democratic culture has yet to set roots in any of them (or in other societies we've engaged on democratization, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia). All of these efforts may soon take on the appearance of what happens when someone tries to plant cut flowers.

The emphasis on democracy, however laudable its intentions, bears many burdens. As rhetoric, it tends to sound triumphalist and

Racism in the Islamic World

How can peace prevail in the Middle East in the face of Islamic bigotry and hate? When will moderate Muslims speak out?

For years, the U.N., led by Islamic and Arab nations and their sympathizers, has accused Israel of racism, but the world consistently turns a blind eye to open, seething anti-Semitism in Islamic society.

What are the facts?

In one of the most astonishing propaganda coups ever, a United Nations conference on racism, which took place in Durban South Africa in 2001, declared that Zionism is racism. No wonder the U.S. and Israel walked out of the meeting, which was dominated by representatives of Islamic and Arab states and other anti-Israel forces, and whose conclusions were predictable from the outset.

The supreme irony of this conference was that it accused no other nation of racism—only Israel. In truth, Israel is perhaps the most

racially and ethnically diverse and tolerant country in the world. More than half of Israel's Jewish population consists of people of color—blacks from Ethiopia and Yemen, as well as brown-skinned people from Morocco, Iran, Syria, Egypt and Israel itself. In addition, Israel's population includes more than one million Arabs, who enjoy the same civil rights as Jewish Israelis. In Israel hate speech is banned, and it is against the law to discriminate based on race or religion.

In contrast, anti-Semitism—a poisonous form of racism directed specifically against the Jewish people—is rampant in most all Islamic societies. Not only is anti-Semitism commonplace in Muslim nations, but it is propagated shamelessly by their leaders, in state-sponsored media, and by Muslim clergy.

For example, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed declared in a 2003 speech to the Organization of Islamic Conference that, "today Jews rule the world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them." Imagine if an American president had made a similarly sweeping and bigoted statement about blacks, Latinos or any other race—what a justifiable uproar, perhaps even an impeachment, would ensue. Yet there was no condemnation by the Muslim world of Mohamed's comments. Rather, virtually all of the conference's Muslim leaders actually voiced their approval.

In response to a terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia in May 2004, Crown Prince Abdullah declared that "Zionism is behind [these] terrorist actions in the kingdom." (Zionism is the code

"Until Muslims reject racism in all forms, they can't expect Islam to enjoy full respect as a political and spiritual force."

word often used by Islamic anti-Semites for Jews.) U.S. Congressman Tom Lantos called the Prince's assertion "an outrage . . . blatant hypocrisy," but Islamic leaders were silent. In fact, millions of Muslims still insist that Zionists were behind the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Anti-Semitism is expressed so freely and ubiquitously in most Islamic societies that no citizen can escape it. During Ramadan in 2002, Egypt's state-controlled TV aired "Horseman Without a Horse," a program based on the notorious forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in which Jews allegedly use the blood

of non-Jews to make Passover matzot. In Iran, a TV series, "Zahra's Blue Eyes," portrays "Zionists" kidnapping Palestinian children and harvesting their organs.

Perhaps nowhere is the hatred of Jews more virulent than among the Palestinians. Most perniciously, Palestinian children are taught in school that Jews are descended from apes and pigs and that the most noble thing they can do is to kill Jews. Muslim clerics like Imam Ibrahim Madiras, an employee of the Palestinian Authority, declared in a 2005 television sermon, "Jews are a cancer" and later that, "Muslims will kill the Jews . . . [and] rejoice in Allah's victory." No surprise, then, that the 1982 doctoral dissertation of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas makes the astounding claim that "Zionists" collaborated with the Nazis to annihilate the Jewish people in order to drive the survivors to Palestine.

Anti-Semitism and the prospects for peace: Islamic anti-Semitism permeates the Arab Middle East and creates an atmosphere in which Jews are reviled and represented as subhuman. How can the Palestinian people embrace peace with a people represented by their religious and political leaders as dehumanized, evil beings? Even more importantly, how can Israel be expected to trust a so-called peace partner who expresses abject hatred and murderous intent toward Jews on a daily basis? Yet the U.S. and many European nations continue to demand that Israel make one-sided sacrifices for peace with a people steeped in racism and committed to its destruction.

Until Islamic leaders muster the integrity to relentlessly condemn anti-Semitism (and its evil twin, anti-Zionism), we can't expect Israel to accept a forced peace with the Palestinians. Likewise, until moderate Muslims reject racism in all forms, they can't expect Islam to enjoy full respect as a political and spiritual force among the world's people.

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sectarian to those who define their public creeds in religious terms. A great many Muslims hear "Christian" when we say "democratic," even when the president doesn't blurt out "crusade," and that is definitely not the way to enlist them as objective allies against salafi terrorists.

As operational strategy, a democracy-promotion emphasis is problematic, too—even when it succeeds. Democratizing trends can have not only universalizing and benign consequences, but parochializing and horrific ones in societies used to defining political loyalties in communal terms. Young populist democracies tend to be warlike, and those who yearn for an Islamic Reformation to create the preconditions for a democratic culture in the Middle East often forget that the Western version involved centuries of strife and more corpses than anyone could count.

Translating slogans about freedom and democracy into successful statecraft means engaging social and cultural realities that are anything but simple. Success comes not from "staying the course," but from understanding the lay of the land. The evidence that we know how to liberalize dozens of Muslim societies is—let me be generous here—mixed.

Alas, then, the prospect that good intentions will again produce counterproductive consequences lies before us. The expectation of irony (and tragedy) in political life is, or at any rate used to be, standard conservative wisdom. Conservatives have also long been distinguished by their skepticism of social engineering and of the utopian mentality generally. So it's hard to see how what Thomas Pickering once wryly called "the second coming of liberation theology" could appeal to a true temperamental conservative.

Then again, a true temperamental conservative sometimes opposes change even when it's in his own interest. So saying that democratic transformation isn't a fitting conservative ideal doesn't mean it's wrong. Maybe this is an historical moment in which this administration's idealist impulses are just what we need. Well, we'll see.

Mr. Garfinkle is editor of *The American Interest*.

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

CONSERVATIVE factions have a number of problems with the Bush Doctrine. Paleos are mostly isolationists who believe that we should spend our treasure at home; most of the world beyond America is beyond redemption anyway, and so should be left to its own devices. Realists believe in a balance of power, and simply want "our guy" to serve American interests, whether (in the old days) keeping out Communists or (today) hunting down radical Islamists and pumping oil. Most Republicans, meanwhile, are willing to suspend judgment on Bush's neo-Wilsonianism and approve of the democratizing doctrine—but only if it works at little cost and does not turn the American people against it, which would reduce the GOP majority.

So where are we? Doing very well and very badly at the same time.

On the plus side, Afghan and Iraqi security forces are hunting down terrorists while trying to craft constitutional governments; the Syrians are out of Lebanon; Colonel Qaddafi and Dr. Khan are retiring from nuclear proliferation; democratic agitation exists in Egypt and the Gulf; and there may be improvement in post-Arafat Palestine. We have confused the Islamic world by pressing for an option other than autocracy and theocracy, and most intellectuals and politicians there are both dumbfounded by and suspicious of our inexplicable idealism. In the long run, pressing for constitutional government is the only *realist* solution to the pathology that led to 9/11: It will allow Arab people to take control of their own affairs and see if they can induce political and economic change of the kind that has begun in Asia, Africa, and South America.

The key is Iraq. If it turns into Lebanon, we will have strengthened the case for dictatorship as the last resort against either chaos or Islamism; but dictatorship will yield only temporary relief and eventually boomerang on us. If, on the other hand, we can stabilize Iraq and see constitutional government emerge, there will be a substantial counterweight—in Afghanistan, Turkey, Iraq, and Jordan—to both radical Islam and brutal dictatorship.

Our problem is that we have not communicated the case for staying in Iraq as well as our opponents have urged the case for leaving. The debate, more than two years after Saddam's fall, is still mired in "Bush lied, thousands died," and ranting about the absence of WMDs. This all finds resonance with the American people, because the public can't quite figure out whether we are going to win.

So where does this leave us? Sort of dazed and nonchalant, as we go about trying to implement the most radical, dangerous—and humane—policy in the recent history of American foreign policy.

Mr. Hanson is a military historian.

JAMES KURTH

AMERICA is a liberal democracy and its national security would indeed be enhanced if countries in the Muslim world were liberal democracies too. It seems obvious that establishing liberal democracies in Muslim lands would be a good thing. But, as people (and peoples) have to learn as they grow up, not everything that would be a good thing can actually become a real thing. Indeed, as conservatives well understand, it is the nature of the human condition that most good things can never be realized. This is especially true of liberal democracy in most countries in the Muslim world, most relevantly Iraq and Afghanistan.

Some observers think that the main obstacle to democracy in Muslim countries is that there is an inherent contradiction between Islam and democracy; but Turkey and Iran give some grounds for thinking that Muslim democracy is quite possible. The real obstacle to democracy in many Muslim countries is not so much that they are Muslim, but that they are multiethnic or multicultural. Undereneath the surface unity of Islam lies the reality of societies divided into several religious, ethnic, or tribal communities. We

know, of course, about the divisions between the Shiite Arabs, the Sunni Arabs, and the (Sunni) Kurds in Iraq; similar divisions characterize Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Lebanon. These communities often fear and loathe one another, and, given the chance, would like to repress and exploit the others or, if that is not possible, to totally separate themselves from them. Historically, the only way that all these communities could be kept together in one state was if one of them set up an authoritarian regime, holding the others so they would not fly apart.

When the U.S. removed Saddam Hussein's Baath regime, it also removed all the constraints on Iraq's inherent centrifugal tendencies. That is why Iraq is now so obviously (and so predictably) flying apart, especially after the U.S. brought enough democracy so that the communities could express and vote their true values and identities. Each of the three major communities in Iraq might conceivably become a democracy, but not Iraq as a whole. It is a melancholy reality about that country that there can be either an Iraq without a democracy or democracies without an Iraq, but there cannot be something that is both an Iraq and a democracy.

For many Muslim countries, the Bush administration's democratization strategy is a mere fantasy. The time has come to put away childish things, and to deal with the world as it really is—which means adopting a more traditional strategy of seeking to turn the inherent divisions between our authoritarian adversaries to our long-term advantage.

Mr. Kurth is a professor of political science at Swarthmore.

ANDREW C. MCCARTHY

ENDORSING American ideals is laudable; but spreading freedom and democracy can never be the linchpin of U.S. security. Framing the issue as such is a triumph of utopian political correctness over clear-eyed resolve. Here are some reasons.

First, while President Bush's rhetoric depicts an idyllic Islam, the one that exists is simply not democratic. Central to democracy is the concept of equal rights and protections under the law. Islam decisively favors men over women and Muslims over non-Muslims. Moreover, because the Koran is deemed the received word of Allah, Islam rejects the legitimacy of laws that run counter to the dictates of its scriptures—the source of these non-egalitarian principles. This doesn't necessarily mean Islamic countries cannot democratize. But it's hard to imagine them transforming absent shedding Islam as the official state religion, something they will resist and—as Iraq shows—we have little stomach to encourage. It is unwise to construct a linchpin out of something so unlikely to happen.

Second, spreading freedom is immensely resource-intensive. It exhausts the assets and commitment vital to instituting the actual linchpin of our national security, the Bush Doctrine. In Iraq, elevating the democracy project over the mission to eradicate militant Islam has resulted in a softer approach to terrorists (lest getting aggressive with them disturb the delicate political process), negoti-

ating with terror groups like Ansar al-Sunna (which continues killing Americans nonetheless), and allowing terror states like Iran and Syria to commit acts of war against U.S. forces with seeming impunity. Perhaps worse, Americans may now be unwilling to support future military actions essential to national security out of fear that those actions will carry an Iraq-like democracy-building price tag—which would make us decidedly less safe.

Finally, the policy's core conceit is that democracies don't make war on one another. That's inapposite when we are besieged by a sub-national, global terror network. Militant Islam has repeatedly used democracies to project power. The millennium bombing plot was hatched in Canada. The hub of the 9/11 conspiracy was Germany. Militant Islam also thrives in England, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and Turkey, among other evolved societies. And if we are eventually hit by a WMD attack, it is very likely to enter via the democracy to the north or the democracy to the south of us. Democracy for the world, even if it were installed tomorrow, would not equal safety for Americans.

Mr. McCarthy is a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

WALTER RUSSELL MEAD

THE essence of the Bush Doctrine is wholesome and sound. It is even inevitable: Liberal society appears to be necessary for the full development of the kind of mass capitalist prosperity that provides the surest basis for domestic tranquility in any country. And societies in which this material prosperity shows no sign of appearing spawn all kinds of disorders—not so much among the poorest of the poor as among the educated and semi-educated classes. It also seems that governments unable to procure legitimacy through the promise of mass prosperity and personal freedom must frequently rely on ideologies of political or religious conflict to secure their positions. They poison the international climate to preserve their stability at home.

In a world in which WMD are ever easier to procure, and in which small cadres of terrorists can wield awesome destructive power, the U.S. has a greater interest than ever in the fostering of liberal societies. But no principle, however great and true, will succeed if it is rigidly and mechanistically held and applied. It is perfectly possible to believe in the long-term necessity of liberal society without calling for a plebiscite on the monarchy in Saudi Arabia next week.

The Bush administration has had successes and partial successes, but there are two great and unresolved problems. The first is Iraq, where the administration's rhetoric has steadily shifted down from initial joyous cries that the war is won, to confident assertions that we are winning the war, to stubborn insistence that we cannot be defeated. A defeat in Iraq would be a serious and possibly fatal blow to the Bush Doctrine—and perhaps to much else besides.

The second problem has to do with international society: Is the society of states a liberal society or isn't it? If it is, and if the U.S. is

the sheriff defending that order, what are the limits on America's sovereign power? It is all very well to argue in an American context that we need a strong sheriff to keep the peace; Americans, after all, elect that sheriff. But what about those who do not have a vote? The essence of liberal society is the limitation of power by laws made by the consent of the governed. To what laws and what consent can the Bush administration point—and what is its answer to those who challenge, on liberal grounds, the prerogatives on which it insists? The administration has a position on these questions, but it has not so far built an internationally persuasive case. This is the job Karen Hughes has been called to do. Much depends on her success. Wish her well.

Mr. Mead is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

MICHAEL NOVAK

THE U.S. mission in Iraq is to take a second huge step—the first was in Afghanistan—in the destruction of Islamofascist terrorism. No Muslim person today is safe from Islamofascists if he supports democracy, or simply gets in their way.

But there is a powerful reality that escapes many self-described realists: We have already succeeded far better in deploying the moral force of human liberty during the last 900 days, since the invasion of Iraq, than any of us had the temerity to predict. Witness the purple-finger jubilation of over 8 million Iraqis during the courageous election of January 30: This election dramatized the fact that the so-called “insurgents,” given exaggerated power by foolish international media, were in fact a tiny sliver of murderous fanatics.

A decent constitution was adopted not long ago in Afghanistan, and a quite precedent-shattering one—based solely on the consent of the governed—is now being put up for ratification in Iraq. Meanwhile, young Afghan and Iraqi men and women are being given good educations, to prepare themselves for a world of opportunity and creativity. Visions of personal creativity—already demonstrably being realized in practice—are more likely to undermine regional terrorism than sheer killing and total force, and to leave behind far less bitterness and hostility. To be sure, such efforts—like all creative ventures—can fail. That is why they are called “ventures”: There are no guarantees. Yet to give a shot at individual dignity, religious freedom, and respect for the full rights and potentialities of people in the Middle East is a noble undertaking and a realistic one.

We in our generation have lived to see the ideals of the 1975 Helsinki Agreement on human rights become reality in less than two decades. Helsinki was more powerful than armed might in putting an unforeseen and sudden end to the Soviet Union and the Berlin Wall, because it targeted the Achilles heel of the USSR: its puny vision of the human spirit.

The Achilles heel of Islamofascists is their utter contempt for the individual dignity of Muslims everywhere. Their own minds are so small and so warped that they see only barbaric force. Thus, not to

see the practical, realistic appeal of yet one more effort in behalf of liberty and human rights in the Middle East is to overlook much that is even now happening before our eyes. In these matters, when soul cries out to soul, the world moves. Deny it if you must.

Eppur si muove!

Mr. Novak holds the George Frederick Jewett Chair in Religion and Public Policy at the American Enterprise Institute.

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

PROMOTING democracy, or human rights, or (as I would prefer) “the blessings of liberty” is a reasonable policy. But it has been oversold as an exercise in utopian idealism and so risks being unreasonably dismissed.

The overselling begins with the theory that authoritarianism breeds terrorism. In fact, most authoritarian regimes, from Spain to Singapore, have not bred terrorism. Spain bred democracy, Singapore stability. Authoritarian governments breed terrorism when they fail economically, outrage deeply held popular beliefs, or both. And that is the situation in the Middle East.

Hence President Bush is too sweeping when he condemns earlier U.S. presidents for forging alliances with authoritarian rulers. The U.S. alliance with China was a decisive factor in winning the Cold War, rooted in a reasonable moral calculation of the greater good. But our indulgence of economically failing Middle East despotisms has lacked any such justification for some years.

How might democracy change this? Well, it would give governments a real incentive (namely, reelection) to tackle economic failure and popular grievances. And as long as these ills remained, democracy would focus blame for them where it belongs—on the governments rather than on Uncle Sam. People could then vote for the opposition rather than, as now, railing impotently against America and the West. So Middle East democracy would be very convenient for Washington.

But is democracy a practicable policy? Democracy is hard to establish in a society divided by race, religion, or tribalism such as Iraq. Once installed, it may be unstable or overthrown. Argentina is only one state that has moved back and forth between democracy and authoritarianism. An impartial umpire (fairly plainly the U.S.) may have to stay on duty for several decades to police the rules. And the terrorist insurgency in Iraq demonstrates that some Iraqis and (presumably) all Islamists will never accept a system they regard as impious.

Recent events have suggested that these obstacles, though real, may not be insuperable. The Iraqi election showed that there was strong popular support for more open and democratic government. The democracy movement in Lebanon showed that the cure was catching. The draft Iraqi constitution—despite its real flaws—showed that most of Iraq's different groups were willing to compromise in a broadly defined national interest.

These are the first faint signs of a democratic Middle East. Its ultimate arrival is not guaranteed. And if it were to be achieved, the

result would look more like Chicago in 1920 than like Utopia. It would nonetheless be a defeat for bin Laden and a great gain for the U.S.

But it won't happen if the umpire walks away in the early innings.

Mr. O'Sullivan is editor-at-large of NATIONAL REVIEW.

MARK STEYN

I SUPPORT the Bush Doctrine on utilitarian grounds: Idealism is the new realism, mainly because realpolitik turns out to be totally unrealistic. Shortly after 9/11, I said somewhere or other that the problem with the SOB thesis of geopolitical management—he may be a son-ofabitch but he's our sonofabitch—is that the reverse is more to the point: He may be our sonofabitch but in the end he's a son-ofabitch. That's proved to be the case with the sources of many of our present woes, not least the House of Saud and the Egyptian regime.

So one reason to favor a policy of liberty-promotion is that there's no downside. Even if it proved unsuccessful in the Middle East, oh, 40 percent or 70 percent or even 100 percent of the time, it would still be preferable to "stability," which means another quarter-century of the ayatollahs, another 40 years of the Syrian Baathists, another 70 years of Saudi Wahhabism.

But in a broader sense it's simply unworthy of a great power not to use its moment to promote its values. Britain did. But since the end of the Second World War, the U.S. has gone to almost perverse lengths not to promote American ideas of liberty and self-government. Americans don't have an imperialist bone in their bodies, so instead they created transnational institutions—the U.N. and its variously malign progeny—explicitly structured to enable groupings of America's weak rivals to combine into a kind of pseudo-superpower. What benefit has this been?

You'll note, by the way, that I have not used the word "democracy." Many of the world's thugs have got very good at holding elections just non-risible enough to pass muster with Jimmy Carter and the U.N. observers. America needs to promote not the act of democracy—the election—but

the process: property rights, the rule of law, self-reliance, etc. Measured by those standards, Iraq and Afghanistan may not be New Hampshire or even Sweden, but they're way ahead of the U.N.-mired Balkans, which are now the geopolitical equivalent of a slum housing project.

Fifty million Muslims living in freedom is a great start to the Bush Doctrine. What worries me is that it doesn't seem directly relevant enough to the American people to hold their interest. I'm not speaking of the decayed Left, but of those on the right who support the warlike aspects of the war but think the nation-building stuff is wimpville—as if, in the Second World War, we'd stopped to reconstruct the Solomon Islands before toppling Hitler and Tojo. They're wrong. This "war" is really one manifestation of a broader civilizational struggle, and it's the strategy for that that will prove decisive.

Mr. Steyn is the author of the forthcoming *America Alone* (Regnery).

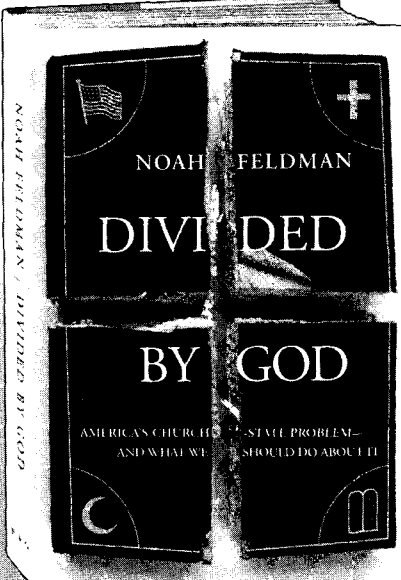


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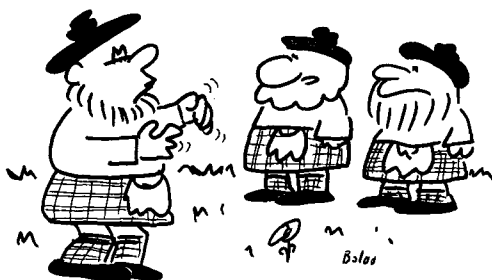


HELLO!!!

TOUGH LOVE

*With Bolton at the U.N., where
The sound of hair, rent, fills the air
Along with teeth gnashed with such force,
Inlays can't take a second course—
Though crème brûlée's still swallowed; it's
Apparent he's secured the bits,
Commands the reins and (go, John, go!)
Will hog-tie Kofi's rodeo.*

—W. H. VON DREELE



"Give it up, McTavish—I don't think the 'air bagpipe' will ever catch on."



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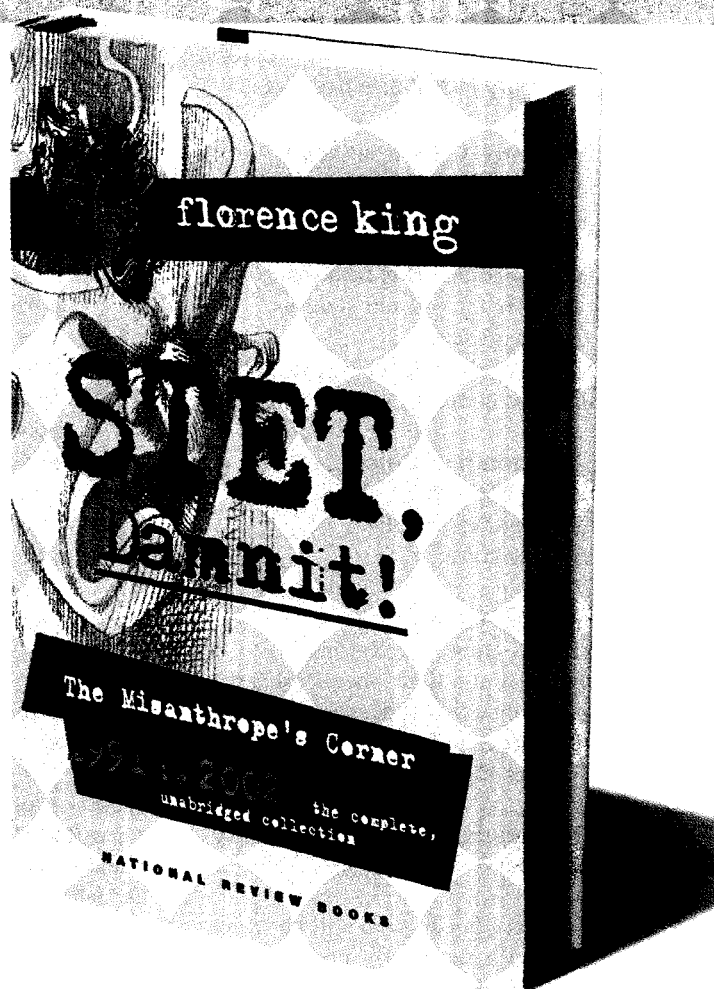
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the long view

ROB LONG

End of Summer Sanity Quiz™

Test Your Grip on Reality!

1. The most interesting thing about the devastation and misery caused by Hurricane Katrina is:

- a) how quickly it pushed Cindy Sheehan off the front page;
- b) that it ends Louisiana governor Kathleen Blanco's chances to be on the '08 Democratic ticket for veep;
- c) it shifts the old red state vs. blue state dialectic;
- d) none of the above. It's a ridiculous question.

2. The death of Chief Justice William Rehnquist is significant because:

- a) it helps Hillary;
- b) it gets Hurricane Katrina off of the front page at a time when Bush's handling of the crisis is deeply unpopular;
- c) Karl Rove probably killed him;
- d) it helps Cheney.

3. Hurricane Katrina helps Hillary because:

- a) it hurts Cheney, who will be seen as linked to a seemingly unfeeling and sluggish administration, and whose daughter is a lesbian;
- b) it hurts Rudy, who wasn't part of the solution to the aftermath, and the country is now one huge disaster removed from 9/11;
- c) the Senate hearings on the cause of and response to Hurricane Katrina will feature her prominently, thus gaining her valuable red-state credibility;
- d) she remembers how to talk in a southern accent.

4. Cindy Sheehan, Hurricane Katrina, and the death of Chief

Justice Rehnquist are all linked because:

- a) they represent key challenges and setbacks to the Bush administration;
- b) they were all orchestrated and/or paid for by Karl Rove from secret Halliburton funds;
- c) Drudge used the siren for each one of them;
- d) it's fun to link things that aren't related at all.

5. What the whole thing boils down to is:

- a) had Halliburton built the levees, this whole thing wouldn't have happened;
- b) an unnecessary and distracting war in Iraq created a global-warming disaster for a corrupt and illegitimate president to mishandle;
- c) people in New Orleans drink too much;
- d) Cindy Sheehan is, truly, America's Mother.

6. Hurricane Katrina helps Rudy because:

- a) the cries of "Where's Rudy?" and "We Need Rudy" reinforced his image as a brand-name problem-solver, especially in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, which might otherwise be resistant to a liberal pro-choice Republican;
- b) he wasn't involved;
- c) he didn't build or maintain the 17th Street Canal;
- d) it doesn't help Rudy at all. It helps Haley Barbour, governor of Mississippi, who has presidential aspirations. As a southern Republican governor, he's now the front-runner.

7. The people who say "there's plenty of blame to go around, let's not point fingers" are probably:

- a) entirely responsible for the disaster, and are just trying to deflect criticism;

- b) looters;
- c) not running for president in 2008;
- d) not Jesse Jackson.

8. The Department of Homeland Security's response to Hurricane Katrina is fascinating because:

- a) Bush was originally against creating the DHS, thinking it would create a useless and slow-moving bureaucracy;
- b) Bush eventually supported creating the DHS, because newspapers and editorials called for it;
- c) it represents the Bush administration's brilliant and cynical manipulation of popular opinion through feel-good patriotism and emotional speeches;
- d) it represents the Bush administration's tin ear for popular opinion resulting in collapsing approval numbers.

9. Karl Rove is happy tonight because:

- a) thousands of people have died;
- b) displaced Louisiana residents may not be able to vote in the 2006 midterm elections, thus solidifying Republican advantage;
- c) distracted by Katrina, John Roberts faces an easy confirmation and can set about dismantling civil rights for women before 2008;
- d) he feasts on the blood and misery of impoverished African Americans.

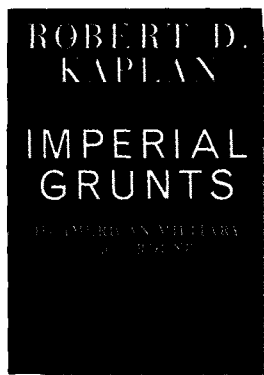
10. Eventually, America will return to normal, and we'll resume talking about the big issues, such as:

- a) gay marriage;
- b) Hillary;
- c) Plamegate;
- d) Cindy Sheehan.

How to score: Give yourself 5 points for every answer (a), 4 for every (b), 3 for every (c), and 2 for every (d). If your score is any number greater than zero (0), you probably have lost your grip on reality. A score greater than 15 indicates an extreme and unhealthy cable-news dependency.



The Good Mission



*Imperial Grunts:
The American Military on the Ground,*
by Robert D. Kaplan
(Random House, 448 pp., \$27.95)

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

THE general caricature of the so-called American imperium portrays it as an overextended giant: We meddle in the affairs of sovereign states, even as our troop levels overseas are dangerously attenuated; enlistees abroad often remain clueless and inept; U.S. soldiers—unlike our diplomats and professors—are oblivious to local cultures and the ramifications of their intrusive presence. This unsustainable effort at world dominion (“overstretch”) is directed at ensuring U.S. global economic and military hegemony, and thus perpetuates a system of economic advantage and material prosperity for privileged Americans even as it ensures the eventual bankruptcy of our treasury and our collective decline. Late imperial Rome, 19th-century Britain, and the USSR of the late 1980s are the critics’

Mr. Hanson is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. His new book, *A War Like No Other* (Random House), will appear in October.

referents for our tottering and corrupt enterprise.

Rarely, however, do the censors take the time to examine carefully the recent American military interventions—in Panama, Serbia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq—that have left consensual governments in their wake, or to appreciate that America does everything from keeping the sea-lanes open in the Persian Gulf to removing the thuggish Milosevics, Mullah Omars, Noriegas, and Saddam Husseins who threaten commercial security and make a mockery of U.N. and EU declarations about universal human rights.

Although Robert Kaplan’s title for his latest travelogue is *Imperial Grunts*, which suggests that a few exploited “grunts” allow the rest of us the benefits of the empire, his account—the first of a promised multivolume series on U.S. troops overseas—is instead sympathetic both to these specialists in the field, and to the mission and larger purpose that put them there. In this inaugural volume Kaplan arranges his firsthand observations according to the structure of American military command that has divided up the world according to the Pentagon’s administrative units (CENTCOM, SOUTHCOM, etc.). Within these regions, Kaplan provides on-the-ground accounts of Yemen, El Salvador, Mongolia, the Balkans, the Philippines, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, Iraq, and Marine bases at Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune. Outside of Iraq and Afghanistan, there is seldom much conventional shooting, but rather a constant cat-and-mouse chase against Islamists, drug gangs, and nihilistic terrorists who all impoverish isolated rural areas and either blackmail or undermine weak national governments. The general idea is that by identifying potential Afghanistans and Somalias now, we can make them inhospitable to a nomadic al-Qaeda later on, as it searches for its next Taliban-like host.

For each vignette, Kaplan has been given entrée to the frontline bases of Special Forces units, and regular Army and Marines engaged in the GWOT (Global War on Terror). His challenge is to explain how a uniform blueprint of operations translates on the ground in a variety of diverse and often bizarre landscapes. Highly trained specialist units are supposed to work closely with American intelligence personnel and diplomatic liaisons to train local militias, provide needed aid to rural villages, and hunt down Islamic terrorists. If the efforts are successful, indigenous forces receive the credit, and empowered locals feed a real sense of liberation from fear and want.

Our mainstream pundits and specialists—when, that is, they even notice these hundreds of small American contingents abroad—are likely to be appalled that low-level officers have vast leeway in decision-making, and that we are training forces that are not always as

Through our
soldiers’
efforts,
lives are
improved
abroad
and we are
made
secure back
home.

liberal as we would prefer. In reality, American troops are hardly trigger-happy grunts, but more often middle-aged sitting ducks that get sniped at while drilling wells and tending the sick. Under congressionally mandated rules of engagement designed to ensure that few Americans either kill or are killed, skilled officers find that all the advantages are with the enemy. Kaplan notes that soldiers in forward bases can often not shoot back at those who are shooting at them—and con-

demns these tactics as both “dumb” and “morally wrong.”

To leave a light imprint and melt in with the locals, our troops must speak Arabic, Spanish, or one of a variety of Asian languages, and look more like them than us. In the end, our soldiers feel a sense of accomplishment: Through these efforts lives are improved abroad and we are made more secure back home. And what a gallery of brilliant men and women Kaplan has uncovered. In our universities, our children may be bombarded with rhetoric of class, race, and gender oppression, but abroad the U.S. is seen as a radically egalitarian society—one that deeply impresses for-

eigners. Take the A-Team Special Forces unit that Kaplan stayed with at Tolemaida, Colombia. Captain Chris Murray, an African-American graduate of Officer Candidate School, Sergeant Ivan Castro, former drill sergeant in charge of training local forces, and Texan Mike Fields are not only a microcosm of the U.S., but remind Colombians that the U.S. is an idea rather than a particular race or tribe. Such men—sophisticated, worldly, and attuned to Colombia's culture—daily make decisions that in other militaries are the prerogative solely of aristocratic colonels and their superiors; they have responsibilities that in other nations would be reserved for senior diplomats.

As Kaplan watches this bunch at work, he senses something much broader. "It was in Colombia that I began to see that the genius of the American military was less technological than social, a reflection of American society whose telling feature was the relative absence of class envy . . . American democracy spawned rich and poor, but the basis for its revolutionary dynamism was the *great middle*. The American military was the clearest example of that. As I would see in my travels, few militaries in history had produced such impressive middle ranks."

Perhaps the epitome of the sort of American now at the tip of the spear is our man in Mongolia, 46-year-old Lt. Col. Tom Wilhelm—West Point graduate; Ranger officer; former bush pilot; veteran of deployments in the Aleutians, Russia, Germany, the Balkans, and Tajikistan; schooled at Leningrad University in Russian and Eastern European languages. With a small team of medical personnel, military specialists, and civilian liaisons, Wilhelm works closely with tribal leaders to advise them about self-defense against terrorists and foreign powers that are eyeing Mongolia as an underpopulated, strategically located prize.

In contrast to his love of the unconventional, Kaplan is often merciless to the traditional military ("Big Army") that sometimes ends up confirming stereotypes of American obtrusiveness, as it deploys thousands

of near-teenagers in massive bases. A *locus classicus* is the huge American depot at Bagram, Afghanistan; Kaplan relates the contemptuous caricature of this base as a "self-licking ice-cream cone." While this facility performs a necessary task in supplying diverse small Special Forces teams and coordinating air and ground reinforcements, Kaplan laments that its insular culture has absorbed very little from the remarkable men in the field.

Perhaps the most interesting—and depressing—chapter is Kaplan's first-hand account of the Spring 2004 assault on, and then sudden pullback from, Fallujah. As Kaplan notes, the Marines who were in the midst of taking back the city—akin to their forefathers' miraculous storming of Hue City—were every bit as courageous and skilled as those on Guadalcanal or Iwo Jima. But Kaplan says there was absolutely no case to be made for "launching a full-scale assault only to reverse it because of political pressures that were easily foreseeable in the first place."

A populist streak runs through Kaplan's chronicles. Those in the Marines, Rangers, and Special Forces are usually from middling classes, advance through merit rather than family money or influence, and—owing to their own sometimes hardscrabble upbringing—exhibit an empathy with the poorer people abroad whom they must protect. For all the miserable conditions of their service, there is very lit-

tle envy among our soldiers of the more fortunate back home. Theirs, rather, is a sort of tragic sense that while our country is not perfect, it surely is better than the alternative, and worth protecting at all costs.

If there is a cosmic lesson in Kaplan's travels, it is a reminder for Americans at home to do a little reexamination of our own lives. By any token, the military, diplomatic, and linguistic skills necessary to survive on the Horn of Africa or in the Amazon Basin—and the value of such missions to American security and global stability—far outweigh those of our supposed heroes, such as wealthy professionals, politicians, marquee actors, writers, and intellectuals. In the world of Robert Kaplan a Special Forces officer, not a Harvard English professor or a Wall Street bond lawyer, is the true Renaissance man, and perhaps the real humanist as well: a modern-day Xenophon or Lawrence, restoring security to an isolated Philippine village or offering medical help in Djibouti.

Robert Kaplan, it should be said, is himself *sui generis*. The majority of contemporary war reporting is either hostile to the U.S. military, or done in the field as a rite of passage for the young, who put up with terrible conditions to craft a reputation that might preclude such sacrifice later. Other than the work of a John Burns or a Rick Atkinson, most contemporary war reporting is jargon-filled, slanted, and poorly written. In contrast, Kaplan is empirical. What he surmises is predicated on what he sees and hears. At middle age, he is navigating not merely the health hazards of malaria and parasites, but—in the Middle East—beheadings, kidnappings, and car bombings. Kaplan is also a gifted stylist who has read widely in both history and literature.

In short, the country is lucky to have him. As *Imperial Grunts* proves, it is time that we acknowledge that Kaplan has evolved into a mixture of the best of William Shirer, Edward R. Murrow, and Ernie Pyle: an American classic who, I pray, will keep safe, as he continues on his lone, dangerous odyssey through the outback of the so-called American empire. **NR**

THE WAY I SEE IT

You come back to pack up a few last things
before you settle in D.C. for good.
The bell sounds, voices call, your cell phone rings.
If anyone would answer them, *you* would.
Instead, you find me waiting, lonely, there,
between the stair and foyer, I would bet,
and sliding fingers through your thick black hair,
you neither turn, neglect me, nor forget,
but with the calm precaution of a prince
witnessing kin and kingdom go to sea,
you tell me of the melancholy, wince,
and say you've found brief confidence in me,
putting me, for one brilliant trice, above
insistence, time, and everything you love.

—JENNIFER REESER

Religious Rights



*Divided by God:
America's Church-State Problem—
And What We Should Do About It,*
by Noah Feldman
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux,
320 pp., \$25)

CHRISTOPHER LEVENICK

CONSERVATIVES and liberals can agree on one thing: The Supreme Court is nowhere so incoherent as in its interpretation of the Establishment Clause. Give nine robed men ten simple words—"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion"—and much confusion will inevitably ensue. The Court will find that Nativity scenes cannot appear on public property, unless they are surrounded by some plastic reindeer, a cutout elephant, and, just to be safe, a talking wishing-well. It will determine that emotionally inchoate 18-year-olds should be spared the harmful effects of a nondenominational prayer before a high-school football game, but that kindergarteners are mature enough to handle daily exposure to a patriotic pledge that explicitly invokes God. It will conclude that a framed Decalogue in a Kentucky courtroom must go, yet a statue of the Ten Commandments near the Texas Capitol can stay. With every passing year, precedent grows more conflicted, and the public more impatient.

Mr. Levenick is a doctoral fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Noah Feldman, one of America's brightest young minds, deplores this trend, and in his justly lauded new book, *Divided by God*, he sets out to introduce a measure of order and clarity into Establishment Clause jurisprudence. Feldman seems magnetically drawn to intractable questions of religion and politics: An expert on Islam and democracy, he was deeply involved in drafting the interim Iraqi constitution. (To a man who has watched Sunnis and Shiites hash out their differences, our problems must look easy.)

Feldman's book is part history and part policy prescription. The historical narrative tends to be episodic rather than continuous. Thus post-revolutionary Virginia's debates over subsidizing ministerial salaries receive careful attention, as do the attempts by 19th-century Catholics to secure public funding for parochial schools (mostly unsuccessful) and social services (mostly successful). The scandal of Mormon bigamy, the rise of American atheism, and the fundamentalist response to modernity are all likewise skillfully presented. It reflects well on Feldman that he respects how long these controversies remained outside the courtroom, and that he never rushes the story to get to the legal material he knows best.

Conflict serves as a central motif of this account. Partly this is a matter of academic fashion: Historians of American religion nowadays eschew consensus narratives, suspecting them of conspiring—either naïvely or perniciously—to deprive marginal groups of their particularity. In Feldman's case, though, something more profound is also at work. Following James Madison, Feldman appreciates how religious diversity can lend stability to the state, a conviction that explains the deliberate ambiguity of the book's title. It could be providential, one may infer, that we are divided by so many creeds.

America remains bound by disagreement, but the character of that disagreement has changed dramatically in the last few decades. No longer do disputes break down along sectarian lines, nor are they resolved in the public square. Today's contests occur before the bench, and they are fought not among churches, but between what Feldman calls "legal

secularism" and "values evangelicalism."

Legal secularism aspires to separate government from religion to the greatest extent possible; its proponents hope to maintain and heighten Jefferson's "wall of separation." Emerging from the horrors of World War II, this concept was born of skepticism about imbuing the state with any divine sanction. Over time, it became more preoccupied with protecting the rights—often equated with feelings—of religious minorities. As the default position within elite legal circles, such secularism has enjoyed tremendous success in getting the courts to bar all manner of traditional public expressions of religion.

Values evangelicalism, by contrast, harks back to the older ideal of non-preferential government support for religion. Such support is deemed indispensable for fostering a shared constellation of moral values, without which a common citizenship cannot exist. Though they repeatedly lose their fights over religious expression, values evangelicals have in the past decade advanced steadily along another front: They have convinced the

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—ANATOL LIEVEN

The Right War?

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courts that religious groups should be eligible for public funds on the same terms as other social organizations.

The judiciary has it exactly backward, Feldman contends: What it needs to do is “offer greater latitude for public religious discourse and religious symbolism, and at the same time insist on a strict ban on state funding of religious institutions and activities.” In short, the country needs to return to the recognition that disestablishment subsists so long as there is neither coercion inflicted nor money expended. It is a measure of how far our jurisprudence has strayed that “no force, no funds” sounds like a radical proposition. But radical it is—radical in the sense that it would require decades of misguided precedent to be vacated, and radical too in the etymological sense of returning the Establishment Clause to its Madisonian *radix*, root.

One never wants to read too much into these things, but Feldman’s receptiveness to so traditional a criterion might—possibly—signal a tectonic shift underway. If a law professor at NYU, former clerk for Justice Souter, and darling of the *New York Times* is pleading for a fairly conservative understanding of the Establishment Clause, might it not suggest a pivot towards sane jurisprudence? And, if so, could it work?

Feldman is savvy enough to acknowledge that both sides may initially resist his proposal. Many on the left certainly have. “Feldman is very wrong about the America that the Christian right is seeking,” writes Michelle Goldberg in *Salon*, which, evidently, involves “Christian supremacy, spiritual and political.” Such complaints are of course sophomoric, but they nevertheless represent a widely felt sentiment among liberals.

Conservatives have more concrete reasons to doubt their opponents’ amenability to compromise. Precedent already favors the secularist, and, since Establishment Clause cases fall under civil-rights laws, the plaintiff enjoys the enormous advantage of one-way fee-shifting. In bringing such suits, activist groups like the ACLU simply cannot lose money. Quite the contrary—if successful they stand to profit by tens, even hundreds, of thousands of dollars.

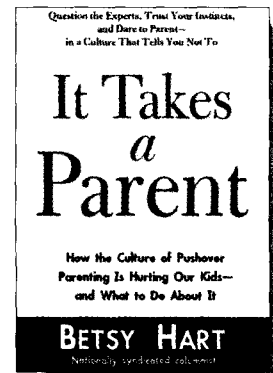
Given this background of mutual distrust, one is entitled to wonder just how realistic Feldman’s attempt at mediation could prove—which makes it all the more curious that he has so little to say about possibly supplementing his principle with a healthy dose of federalism. The federalist solution—increasingly associated with Justice Thomas—takes seriously the text of the First Amendment. The Establishment Clause simply prohibits the national government from interfering with prerogatives traditionally reserved for the states. On this view, the modern Supreme Court has twice erred gravely: first in applying disestablishment to every level of government, and then again in casting itself as the sole arbiter for all of the nation’s religious disputes. Resolving the problem would thus entail relinquishing authority back to state and local governments.

Feldman’s cursory treatment of the federalist approach—no more than a handful of intermittent paragraphs—compares unfavorably with his extremely well-developed critiques of legal secularism and values evangelicalism. One suspects that he finds the indeterminacy of federalism intellectually unsatisfying, a far cry from the enduring principle he seeks. But Feldman, good Madisonian that he is, surely knows that principle distances itself from politics only at great peril. Allowing local communities to set their own policies is probably more politically feasible than continuing to try to impose a top-down, nationwide rule. And recourse to such an expedient need not override Feldman’s principle, but rather might supplement it: Most jurisdictions would, I suspect, voluntarily adopt that principle, just as they did throughout American history.

Some, however, would not—but in so doing they would actually enlarge the very diversity that Feldman, again following Madison, quite correctly sees as “a blessing and a source of strength or balance.” If a multiplicity of sects contributes to our republican vigor, so too should a variety of church-state arrangements—provided, of course, that none infringes on the individual right of conscience. We are constituted, after all, by our willingness to disagree amicably, no less about religion than politics, and where the twain should meet.

NR

Where the Buck Stops



It Takes a Parent: How the Culture of Pushover Parenting Is Hurting Our Kids—and What to Do About It, by Betsy Hart (Putnam, 272 pp., \$25.95)

MEGHAN COX GURDON

THE other day my eleven-year-old daughter was drawing illustrations for a summer book report assigned by her English teacher. We happened to be at a local pool, and while she shielded her pictures from the splashes of her siblings, I was chatting with a clutch of other mothers about—what else?—our “parenting techniques.”

“Excuse me,” my daughter interrupted, holding out a drawing with a dubious look on her face. “What do you think of this one? Does this work?”

I glanced at it. “No,” I said, “not good,” and I balled it up. My daughter nodded; she had thought so, too, and she calmly pulled out a fresh sheet of paper. But from the reaction of my fellow mothers, you would have thought I’d punched the child in the nose.

“That’s it?” one woman murmured incredulously. “Just . . . no? Not good? Don’t you think you should be a little more supportive?”

In a flash, I realized that I had just transgressed the most sacred dictates of what

Meghan Cox Gurdon is a columnist for National Review Online.

author Betsy Hart calls the “parenting culture.” No wonder the other mothers were shocked: I had not praised my daughter’s efforts before delicately urging her to redouble them, but had engaged in open criticism. I had not phrased my response in such a way as to preserve her delicately flowering self-esteem. And, most egregiously, I had committed the unutterable no-no of uttering “No.”

The funny thing is, before I’d read Betsy Hart’s takedown of the culture of pushover parenting, I think I might have felt obliged to explain myself to my horror-struck acquaintances. “She did ask my opinion,” I could have shrugged guiltily, or perhaps self-deprecatingly laughed, “Gee, I hope I didn’t sound harsh!”

But once you read *It Takes a Parent*—and if you have children, you should read it—you may feel almost gleeful, as I did, to follow your own instincts instead of the honeyed rules of the parenting culture.

These rules pervade the bulk of current writing and thinking about child-rearing, and will be embarrassingly familiar to anyone who has spent time recently with children and their parents. But I must warn you: After reading Hart’s book, even straight-spined, neo-traditional, NATIONAL REVIEW–subscribing parents may be chagrined by the degree to which they have absorbed these tenets—and the frequency with which they unconsciously follow them.

What is the creed? First, even if it means bending like a circus contortionist, parents must always “empower” children and “use directives sparingly” to avoid the crushing negativity of that awful word, “no.” To “help our children make wise decisions in their lives,” we must give even toddlers abundant choices: “Would you like apple juice, or orange juice? In the blue cup, or the red sippy cup? Do you want to sit here at the table, or—oh, you want to sit on the floor? Okay!”

Our behavior must reflect the understanding that building children’s self-esteem is the most important task of parenthood. We must assure our children that they are wonderful just the way they are (“our kids deserve to feel good about themselves,” enthuses one expert quoted by Hart, “simply because they exist”). We must criticize only the behavior, never the child (who is, remember, wonderful

just the way he is), and must reassure turbulent infants that their feelings, in the words of another expert, “are always okay—they are never right or wrong.”

“Feelings are never right or wrong?” Hart writes. “I’m going to go out on a limb here. I think Hitler’s hatred of Jews was wrong.” She goes on: The “entire focus on feelings in the parenting culture is only about the appropriate expression of feelings. The focus is almost never on the feelings themselves, nor on the idea that some feelings are not okay or that some feelings may need to be reconsidered, because they’re a clue that our hearts are not okay, before they lead to unwholesome, dangerous, or malicious behavior.”

When Betsy Hart writes “heart,” she is talking about the soul, which, for too many children, she believes, goes neglected amidst all the parental straining to be fun, understanding, and non-confrontational.

“There’s no doubt that as religious influence has waned in this country, many parents are trying to fill a void in their spiritual life by vainly putting everything into the one thing that will live on after them—their kids,” Hart argues. “So, each child is nurtured and protected and fawned over like a hothouse flower, when they are actually hardy little geraniums who need to be outside soaking up the sun. Even if being left out in the sun means they will experience a lot of wind and rain. After all, they need rain to thrive, too.”

The result is a society awash in ill-tempered, ill-mannered, self-centered, joyless children spoiled by too many choices.

So, what to do? Betsy Hart’s book is not so much an egg-headed analytical treatise as it is a bracing pep talk from a wise friend, and the wisdom begins in the title: It takes a parent, not a Clintonesque village. Please, the author exhorts mothers and fathers, be parents: Be not afraid to assert your authority rather than cede it at the first childish howl, or at the first gasp of disapproval from the parenting culture.

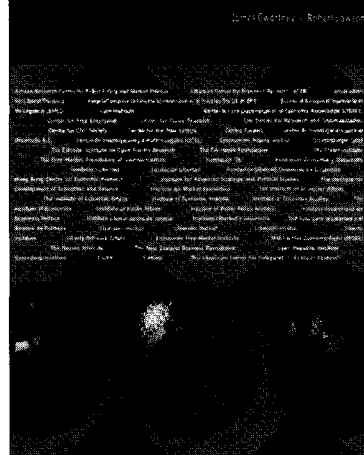
Our job, she reminds us, is not to be our children’s friends, or facilitators, or self-esteem coaches; our job, for heaven’s sake, is to civilize the little savages, and we can hardly do that properly if we fear we will smash their self-esteem by denying them a choice in the juice they get for breakfast.

NR

An invaluable contribution.

— Douglas North
Nobel Laureate

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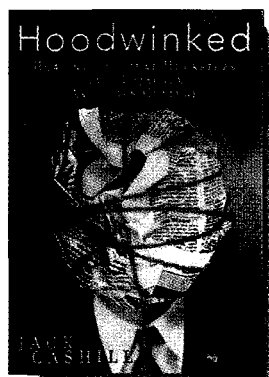
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Forceful Frauds



Hoodwinked: How Intellectual Hucksters Have Hijacked American Culture,
by Jack Cashill
(Nelson Current, 320 pp., \$24.99)

RICHARD NADLER

It takes a villa to perpetrate a cultural fraud: Behind every hoaxster playing fast and loose with facts stands a teeming mansion of elite supporters, from professionals and educators to celebrities and journalists. So says Jack Cashill in *Hoodwinked*, his

Mr. Nadler is the executive director of America's Majority, a think tank dedicated to expanding the electoral base of the conservative movement.

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—Rush Limbaugh

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executive summary of the cultural frauds of the Left over the past century.

Cashill reports ably on the intellectual crimes of the purveyors of Marxism, multiculturalism, materialist naturalism, and sexual liberation. Some highlights: Reporter Walter Duranty praised a nonexistent Soviet economic boom from the vortex of the Stalinist holocaust. In the famous Piltdown hoax, British scientists proved man's descent from the apes with a human skull, an orangutan jaw, and a pint of furniture stain. To cover her middle-class Marxist rear end, Rigoberta Menchú wove a peasant history out of whole cloth. Aided by a fertile imagination, anthropologist Margaret Mead salvaged a Samoan sexual Shangri-La from the ruins of a botched field trip.

Professional associations have played an astonishing role in the perpetration of mass fraud. Alex Haley's *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* was awarded a special Pulitzer Prize en route to its enshrinement as a centerpiece of college multicultural curricula. But as reporter Philip Nobile proved, large portions of *Roots* were plagiarized, and other portions simply invented.

Fudged quotes and faked data formed the core of Michael Bellesiles's 1996 thesis that gun ownership was rare on the American frontier in the 18th and 19th centuries. But this didn't prevent the Organization of American Historians from giving a special award to his "research," which had been published in the prestigious *Journal of American History*. It took six years of stubborn fact-checking by Clayton Cramer to overturn this myth—an effort that destroyed his own career as thoroughly as it did that of Bellesiles.

Rigoberta Menchú's Marxist pseudo-autobiography was eventually unmasked by Guatemala expert David Stoll—but not before she had received the French Legion of Honor from Jacques Chirac, the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize, and a special United Nations "goodwill" ambassadorship as a representative of the Third World.

Cashill highlights not just the phonies but their nemeses: "an unconnected and largely apolitical squad of literary detectives, biographers, anthropologists, scientists, historians, classicists, and cultural critics" who have been "picking off the frauds and their enablers one by one."

We meet such irregulars as classicist Mary Lefkowitz, who unmasked the "African studies" misinformation about Greek and Roman culture; Army veteran B. G. Burkett, who counter-attacked John Kerry and the "Winter Soldiers" on the American role in Vietnam; and J. Gordon Edwards, who countered Rachel Carson's campaign against the anti-malarial agent DDT.

Many of Cashill's heroes are leftists who refused to sell out truth for ideology. Mary McCarthy, for example, exposed Lillian Hellman as a Stalinist liar; in *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell exposed Soviet duplicity during the Spanish Civil War.

My favorite debunker in the book is liberal New York University physics professor Alan Sokal. Disturbed by the postmodernist dogma that no truth is objective, he composed a send-up titled "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformational Hermeneutics of Quantum Physics." In this article, he contended that physics is a social construct whose purpose is to conceal power relationships: "Scientific 'knowledge,' far from being objective, reflects and encodes the dominant ideologies and power relations of the culture that produced it." The editors of the iconic postmodernist journal *Social Text* published the article, and expressed their pleasure at "the work of a progressive physicist committed to the critique of science."

The four "progressive" tendencies Cashill scours for hoaxes are "radical naturalism, sexual hedonism, Marxism, and multiculturalism." The proponents of these tendencies share, he says, an enmity to Western culture and an intellectual descent from Darwin and Marx. Cashill accuses them of "zero-sum multiculturalism": the conviction that any triumph or advance of Western civilization implies an equal and opposite decline or injury inflicted upon the rest of mankind. The cultural icons whom Cashill debunks are convinced that capitalism is a system not of wealth formation, but of wealth extraction; and that the monogamous family is an instrument not of nurture, but of oppression. Above all, he writes, they believe that service to God demeans man.

An interesting subtext of *Hoodwinked* involves the different utopias promised by cultural and material determinism.

The cultural determinists were sexual liberators who believed that if the restraints of religion were removed, mankind could be refashioned to happiness—in the sense of subjective fulfillment based on orgasm. The material determinists, on the other hand, were national or international socialists, who believed that if the restraints of religion were removed, mankind could be refashioned to happiness—in the sense of material fulfillment built on seizure of the means of production. Both schools, however, agreed in recognizing the importance of elites—i.e., themselves—in creating the determinative conditions of the new mankind. They, at least, were free.

Ernst Haeckel, whose inaccurate portraits of embryological development still grace many contemporary biology textbooks, typifies the material determinists: He was a committed early Darwinian whose career traveled the troubled waters of eugenics to a pre-Nazi form of Aryan supremacy. The cultural determinists find their representative in biologist Alfred Kinsey. A bisexual and a masochist, Kinsey set about to prove these traits normative; he assembled a research team unrestrained by sexual taboos that proceeded to “discover” man in his own image. Childhood eroticism was essential to Kinsey’s theory; he investigated it by indirectly financing serial incidents of child abuse.

The unanswered question of Cashill’s book is why these miscreants, whose hoaxes spread so swiftly, were refuted so slowly, and with such great difficulty, if at all. *Hoodwinked* skillfully presents the intrigues of the elite village; but deceptions that transform an entire civilization require *more* than a village. They require a wholesale breakdown in the transmission of the values that these individuals are attacking.

Some readers may have encountered Kansas journalist Cashill as one of the villains of Thomas Frank’s liberal best-seller *What’s the Matter With Kansas?* In *Hoodwinked*, you will hear Cashill in his own voice: clear-spoken, witty, and erudite. For years, his journalism has been part of what is right about Kansas, and about red-state America in general; this fine book is a new highlight in an important career.

NR

■ SHELF LIFE ■

The Acid Test



MICHAEL POTE MRA

LEGENDARY critic John Simon admits that he is “open to charges of political analphabetism”: “I have always sympathized with the autobiographical hero of Anatole France’s *Le Lys rouge* who declares, ‘I am not so devoid of all talents as to occupy myself with politics.’” The remark is characteristic of Simon, an idio-

syncratic polymath who revels in his resistance to trends (political correctness very much included). Applause Theatre & Cinema Books has just provided copious further documentation of these qualities, by releasing three volumes’ worth of Simon’s work as chronicler—and steely-eyed judge—of the arts: *John Simon on Theater: Criticism 1974–2003* (837 pp., \$32.95), *John Simon on Film: Criticism 1982–2001* (662 pp., \$29.95), and *John Simon on Music: Criticism 1979–2005* (504 pp., \$27.95).

It’s well known that negative reviews are more fun to read than positive ones, and Simon’s are an especially guilty pleasure. Here are examples, taken almost at random from the volumes: “There is a canard abroad, originated by [Edward] Albee himself, that an Albee play has linguistic distinction. It has, to be sure, a style more literary than that of a play by Murray Schisgal or Neil Simon, but so has a sophomore term paper about William Faulkner.” “Merchant and Ivory should have been ivory merchants, a field in which fakery thrives.” “There’s nothing redeeming about Joe Papp’s *Julius*

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Caesar, the second item in a six-year complete Shakespeare cycle that promises to be as artistic as a seven-day bicycle race."

He is also a master of the brittle cultural summation: "American movies today are aimed at three kinds of audiences: kids, cokeheads, and those seeking any kind of loud and vulgar stimulation with which to fill up a gaping inner emptiness for a couple of hours." And, prompted by Leonard Bernstein's podium caperings: "To a majority of laymen who cannot follow the music in any other way, it is such gyrations, such facial expressions of rapt transfiguration that spell out the meaning of the music. They are to the tone-deaf what Braille is to the blind."

One need not concede the justice of all—or indeed any—of these Simonisms to enjoy them immensely. And then come the refreshing declarations of love: of the beautiful 1995 Iranian film *The White Balloon*, the 1997 noir classic *L.A. Confidential*, Erick Zonca's touching 1998 *The Dreamlife of Angels*, Beth Henley's play *Crimes of the Heart* . . . in short, enough of them to demonstrate that beauty remains alive in the contemporary arts. To read these three books is to explore a mind brilliantly—and passionately—engaged in the struggle to advance that beauty.

■ That Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon has provided a blurb for Alan Dershowitz's new book, *The Case for Peace: How the Arab-Israeli Conflict Can Be Resolved* (Wiley, 246 pp., \$22.95), will come as a surprise only to those who believe in the Left's caricature of the Mideast conflict. In actuality, Israel is precisely the sort of liberal state—founded on democracy and respect for human rights—that liberals like Dershowitz ought to champion; that so many self-described American liberals view Israel's fight for survival with thinly disguised contempt is an enduring disgrace.

Like Sharon, Dershowitz is a believer in "a real peace with security." He harbors no illusions about Palestinian terrorists,

and refutes the ubiquitous chatter about a "cycle of violence"—the myth that Israel's counterterrorism measures are themselves somehow to blame for suicide bombings and other atrocities. "The time has come," he writes, "to address the real root cause of suicide bombing: elitist incitement by certain religious and political leaders who are creating a culture of death and exploiting the ambiguous teachings of an important religion."

Furthermore, he recognizes that Israel's continuing ability to defend itself is central to any workable two-state peace settlement: "The only guarantee of peace in the region is a qualitatively superior Israeli military deterrent. Whenever an Arab nation, or a combination of Arab

nations . . . believed itself capable of destroying Israel militarily, there [was] war. Whenever Israel's military superiority has been clear, there has been no war."

The core principles of Western civilization are at stake in the defense of Israel—but important sectors of the West are showing an inadequate level of understanding of, and commitment to, those principles. Dershowitz quotes a telling observation from Israeli novelist Amos Oz: "The graffiti in Europe have also changed . . . When my

father was a young man in Vilna, every wall in Europe said, 'Jews go home to Palestine.' Fifty years later, when he went back to Europe on a visit, the walls all screamed, 'Jews get out of Palestine.'" Alan Dershowitz is issuing a timely call to the West to reject bigotries of the past and present, and stand up for its better self: a self that will help build a Mideast peace that is founded on justice.

■ The mullahs' regime in Iran is a major supporter of terrorism, and one of the greatest threats to world peace. In *Tehran Rising: Iran's Challenge to the United States* (Rowman & Littlefield, 218 pp., \$24.95), Ilan Berman—vice president for policy of the American Foreign Policy Council and adjunct professor of international law and global security at the

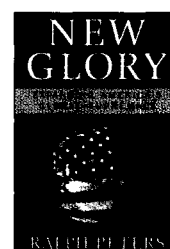
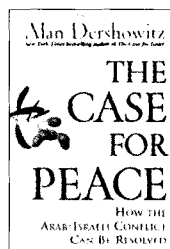
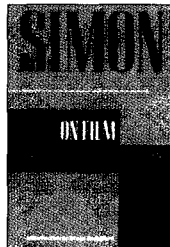
National Defense University—outlines the threat persuasively and in detail. Iran is making a "massive" push to develop nuclear weapons, "encompassing close to two dozen strategic sites scattered throughout the country." Already "the preeminent military power in the Persian Gulf, and the region's dominant political and strategic force," the theocracy is headed toward superpower status. Berman makes a strong case for a U.S. policy of regime change; his book deserves serious attention.

■ Journalist Ralph Peters, a retired Army intelligence officer, provides a sweeping guide to national defense and foreign-policy strategy in *New Glory: Expanding America's Global Supremacy* (Sentinel, 292 pp., \$24.95). Peters is a Washington veteran, and impatient with some of its characteristic behavior that ends up subverting the public good: "The most insincere phrase in circulation in Washington, D.C., is 'think outside the box.' In Washington, when a superior tells you to think outside the box he or she wants you to come back

with fresh reasons why the in-house position was right all along." Real thinking—outside-the-box comes naturally to Peters, whose iconoclastic cast of mind is evident in the following passage: "One of the most valuable early lessons I received in the cruelty of intellectuals came when I read Thomas More's *Utopia* in my early teens—after purchasing a copy under the influence of one of the twentieth century's disinformation successes, the film of Robert Bolt's play *A Man for All Seasons*. I was mortified by what I read. I realized immediately that More's disciplined world—a harshly limiting place—was not

one for the human beings I knew. And it certainly wasn't for me. I began to view Henry VIII more sympathetically."

Not quite fair to More, but Peters's strictures against intellectual utopianism in general are well taken. Peters is an astute and historically informed observer of the world's cultures and politics, so the vision he offers in *New Glory* manages to be not just inspiring but also highly realistic. A world in which America solidifies its leadership role will be a better place for mankind; to achieve such a world will



require the work of people who, like Peters, are capable of unconventional thought.

■ The Senate's consideration of the John Roberts Supreme Court nomination provides us a healthy opportunity to focus on some crucial constitutional issues. Robert H. Bork has edited a new collection of essays, *"A Country I Do Not Recognize": The Legal Assault on American Values* (Hoover, 196 pp., \$15), in which eminent scholars diagnose the current legal pathologies. Some of the most trenchant writing is in Bork's introduction: "'Outside the mainstream' . . . is the standard liberal epithet for any judge who adheres to the original understanding in applying the Constitution's principles to current controversies. What the cultural Left calls the 'mainstream' is a polluted current that has long since overflowed its banks and is wreaking devastation on America's moral and aesthetic landscape." Among the contributors to the volume are Terry Eastland, Gary L. McDowell, and Lee A. Casey and David B. Rivkin Jr. (with an essay on the dangers posed to U.S. sovereignty by fashionable theories of international law).

■ *The Weekly Standard* celebrates its tenth anniversary with an impressive anthology, *The Weekly Standard: A Reader: 1995–2005* (HarperCollins, 538 pp., \$27.95). Editor William Kristol has made some great choices in the longer articles he has included in the book—for example, a 2002 Christopher Caldwell essay on French anti-Semitism. But one is especially grateful for the inclusion of David Tell's 1999 *"I Disonesti,"* a faux-opera synopsis of the Clinton impeachment that was one of the funniest pieces of the 1990s.

■ Full disclosure: I have met Raymond Arroyo, the news anchor of Catholic cable-TV network EWTN, and I can testify that he is one of the nicest people on earth. So when I heard that he was writing a full-length biography of his own boss—who is, as if that weren't enough, a nun to boot—I naturally feared the worst: a

hagiography of the most cloyingly saccharine kind. Well, not to worry. The book—*Mother Angelica: The Remarkable Story of a Nun, Her Nerve, and a Network of Miracles* (Doubleday, 384 pp., \$23.95)—is a solidly researched, professionally told account of one of the most improbable successes of recent years. The EWTN network founded by Mother Angelica—née Rita Antoinette Rizzo in Canton, Ohio—faced down the ferocious opposition of Catholic authorities and has not just survived but prospered. Much of its programming is of devotional value not just to Catholics, but to members of other churches as well—and also serves as a valuable demonstration of how intellectually challenging religious content can be successfully communicated on TV.

■ If the bestseller list is anything to go by, the cause of tax reform is alive and well: America's number-one nonfiction volume these days is *The FairTax Book: Saying Goodbye to the Income Tax and the IRS* (Regan, 188 pp., \$24.95), by Neal Boortz and Congressman John Linder, which proposes replacing the current system of income taxes and federal withholding with a 23 percent flat retail-sales tax. Another worthy entrant in the tax-cut stakes—and equally willing to think big—is Steve Forbes, with *Flat*

Tax Revolution: Using a Postcard to Abolish the IRS (Regnery, 216 pp., \$24.95). Forbes was a pioneer of the flat-tax movement and remains one of its most persuasive advocates; he calls for a 17 percent flat rate for income and corporate taxes.

■ The death of film director Alan Pakula in a 1998 car accident robbed the cinema prematurely of one of its greatest artists; but justice is done to his life's work in Jared Brown's marvelous new biography *Alan J. Pakula: His Films and His Life* (Back Stage, 416 pp., \$29.95), which includes fascinating details about the making of such masterpieces as *Klute*, *All the President's Men*, and *The Parallax View*.

■ Epiphanies in daily life are the subject of the new anthology *In Real Life:*



Powerful Lessons from Everyday Living (New Beginnings, 237 pp., \$17.95), edited by Karl Zinsmeister with Karina Rollins. Zinsmeister and Rollins are based at *The American Enterprise* magazine, in which the vignettes initially appeared; the volume is refreshing.

■ Zinsmeister, once an embedded journalist in Iraq, has also done a fine job with his new graphic novel, *Combat Zone: True Tales of GIs in Iraq* (Marvel, 120 pp., \$19.99). **NR**

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Walk On By



RICHARD BROOKHISER

FOUR days a week the farmers' market turns the north end of the park into a double row of meat, fish, cut flowers, peppers, peaches, tomatoes, and the hairy root ends of radishes, carrots, and beets. A tide of New Yorkers runs the gauntlet of bounty, stopping to ask for a price, slowing around the wide load of a baby stroller, weaving in the effort to turn a crowd into a shortcut. Musicians sing badly, a man carries a parrot on his shoulder: the usual.

The first unusual things I noticed were shouts and a jostle, about 20 feet away from me. There was anger in the voices, and the collision looked deliberate. Fighting over the last smoked turkey carcass? In another moment, I resolved the activity into two men. A stout, bearded man about 50 was doing most of the doing. He held the arm of an ordinary-looking forty-something, and shouted. "Get down! Get down!" His voice was urgent, aggrieved, almost wild. "Get down, motherf*****!" He struck his prisoner on the shoulder.

I briefly lost sight of them behind a curtain of coalescing spectators. I assumed a victim had nabbed a pickpocket. I had seen such a thing one time on Fifth Avenue: A young punk "bumped" into an older man who was waiting for a WALK sign, but the bump was too obvious. The older man shouted; the punk, cleverly, ran off shouting as if he were the pursuer; I didn't see whether he was caught. There was no room to run in the farmers' mar-

ket now. As I came abreast of the pair, the younger man had been forced to his knees. The bearded man was explaining to anyone who would listen, and many would, why he had grabbed him: He was taking pictures up women's skirts. The accusation acted like a promotion: Suddenly the scene was compelling.

You saw how the thing was done. The prone man was holding a plastic shopping bag; a camcorder, pointing up, could easily be maneuvered to get a shot. (It wouldn't have worked in Mathew Brady's day; the flesh might have been willing, but the technology was weak.) A summer farmers' market would have been an ideal casting call. "Look at his camera," someone suggested, as if we would confirm the misdeed then and there. No one moved; that task was left for the cops.

A woman called 911 on her cell phone, in a rage; she cursed the perp, maybe shook her fist at him, I don't remember. The crowd was disgusted and contemptuous, more hostile than it would have been towards a thief. In a tougher age, or neighborhood, they might have roughed the guy up. One thing the law protects us against is justice. The Romans had a saying: *Fiat justitia, ruat caelum*. Let justice be done though the heavens fall. This is not necessarily an exhortation. If only justice is done, and done too swiftly, a lot falls along the way.

Was the prone man in fact guilty? I assumed so, from the entire collapse of his morale. After the first resistance, which was probably a physical reaction to being grabbed, he sank into silence and passivity. He did not hide his face, but he looked downward, in oblique directions, avoiding our eyes. No defense, no explanation, no lip. Not everyone who talks back is innocent, of course. A lot of crooks bluster and gab with the best of them. But this man gave every mark of knowing that his situation was hopeless. Perhaps that knowledge was part of his payoff, shame the icing on his perversion. Shame, and publicity: Everyone now knew how clever and powerful he had been, even if his cleverness had failed at last. The moment of punishment and the moment

of acknowledgment are the same.

Peeping photographers collect for themselves. But no doubt they also share images online. Perhaps the prone man had a blog, like *kausfiles* or *Instapundit*; perhaps, given the way the world works, he got more hits. What is the status of a voyeur in an exhibitionistic culture? Tom Wolfe was writing about "buttocks de-colletage" 40 years ago. A connoisseur of such things can go to any newsstand; any public park, if the weather is right. But not everyone exhibits, and even those who do, choose their occasions. The voyeur wants violation; he needs to have no permission.

This is the explanation of our rage, even when the billboards shout allurements. Some societies imagine they can thwart ogling by adopting a regime of universal modesty, covering everybody up and lowering the level of desire generally. But this is no foolproof remedy.

We read that women in Saudi Arabia are great consumers of lingerie, and if nunneries were never the carnivals of vice that Protestant propagandists imagined them to be, they certainly stimulated the unhealthy imaginations of those outside the walls (as witness Sade). Get thee to a nunnery if you have a vocation; don't do it for the good of society.

"I'm going on," said my wife, who is more interested in herbs than pervs. She is a psychoanalyst; this was a busman's holiday for her. We

went down to the end of the market, then worked our way back. By the time we returned to the crime scene, the man was still there, still prone. The market's own security force was on the case—a black man in a suit, talking on a walkie-talkie—but not yet the police. This time I did not linger. I should have remembered one of George Washington's rules of civility: "When you see a crime punished"—no rare thing in an age of stocks and gallows—though "you may be inwardly pleased, always show pity to the suffering offender." There are other forms of voyeurism besides looking up women's skirts. Bad men are still men, and unless their crimes are monstrous they deserve not to be gawked at. I didn't show the guy any pity, but I moved on.

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Curbing God's Laws

NEW YORK, AUGUST 23

MUCH time (and space) are being given to the question of religion and science. There is continuing preoccupation with it, and the question is parsed week after week in different theaters: Is God admissible in purposive thought? Some say that the rejection of religion is a primary step in intelligent thought. Contenders on both sides of the issue will sometimes find themselves retreating into caricature. They will say, for instance, that belief in God and belief in science are mutually exclusive, that the renunciation of one is required in order to subscribe to the other. But these caricatures are undermined from within, as when one finds Dr. Kenneth Miller of Brown University, a scientist of high professional esteem who, on Sundays, attends church and professes his faith.

A recent survey in the *New York Times* spoke of the eminent C. S. Lewis. He grew up a skeptic. But in his twenties, he gradually admitted the evidence in favor first of the existence of God, then of the divinity of Christ. In his book *Mere Christianity*, Lewis argues that the idea of right and wrong is universal, a moral law that human beings "did not make and cannot quite forget even when they try."

Such an epiphany won't get you too far in Christian taxonomy, but it is a step in that direction. The crowning reservation of the man seeking to believe wholly in science may be that, in the scrawny hands of the evolutionists, too much is left unexplained. The Christian religion depends very heavily on revelation for its acceptance, and revelation acknowledges the interventionist finger of God, on which we cannot rely, but which we cannot dismiss. Skeptics who incline away from any belief in divine intervention can nevertheless find themselves pondering questions of right and wrong which issue from moral divisions in

which science plays no part. One such is cited in the *New York Times* essay. Dr. Joseph Murray, who won the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1990 for his work in organ transplantation, once divulged that when he was preparing for the first-ever human organ transplant, a kidney that a young man was donating to his identical twin, he and his colleagues consulted a number of religious leaders to inquire whether they were doing the right thing. "When you are searching for truth you should use every possible avenue, including revelation," Murray said.

In the U.S., the battlefield is in the schools, on the question of evolution and creationism. If a 14-year-old student is introduced to the contingent possibility that life evolved as it did because its creator so willed it, which of the following risks, from the hard-line evolutionists' point of view, is that student taking? 1) His intellectual disqualification by admitting creationism, for which there is no scientific warrant, into his thinking? 2) A lifelong intellectual confusion which will keep him from prevailing as a responsible thinker and actor? Or perhaps, 3) a lifetime as an agent of teleological confusion, with the result that he will not only mislead himself, but also others?

In Iraq, the national assembly that has met to devise a new constitution appears to be stalled on several points, one of them being the nature of the new supreme court. Should it be a secular body, or should four of the nine seats be reserved for clerics? Will civil law prevail, or will the court be charged with ruling on whether any proposed measure conforms to the sharia? Thus the question of women's rights would become not a question of positive law, but a question of Koranic fidelity.

There are factions, Kurdish, Sunni, and even Shiite, which argue against such distribution of power, but there is no denying the strength of those who argue that only adjudications traceable to divine warrant have the authority to prevail. There has never been a neo-society so desperately in need of the idea of a division of church and state.



Robertson's Death Wishes

NEW YORK, AUGUST 26

THE blurt by Pat Robertson on the matter of Hugo Chávez received the kind of spastic disavowal it deserved. It would not be sensible to undertake the assassination of Hugo Chávez. Diplomatically it was a mistake even to use the language of assassination. And the greatest damage was to increase the odds against any assassination of Chávez. If he was going to be shot, or yanked from office, this could be done, and would best be done, by Venezuelans. They very nearly did it last April. U.S. intervention to limit Chávez's term was alleged back then, but we could plausibly deny having had anything to do with the movement to recall him. Now, even though Pat Robertson cannot be conceived by a jury of halfwits as representing U.S. policy, what he said will be quoted by generations of communists in the religion of anti-yanquiism to throw doubt on U.S. bona fides.

The principal reason to disavow the assassination of foreign leaders is self-interest. People who are elected or who otherwise achieve political primacy are vested with sacramental immunity. Many kings, presidents, and dictators depend for their survival on domestic arrangements. The Emperor Julian required that anyone who entered into his chamber should be stark naked. Mao Tse-tung did not go that far, but might as well have done so given the elaborate measures he adopted to remove himself from the common man he spent his lifetime glorifying, and avoiding the company of.

Now here is a key point. Sometimes rules are broken. But it is always wrong to admit that they have been broken. It was this rule that was most flagrantly violated by the Church Committee in 1975. Here was a "Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities." I am staring at Senate Report No. 94-465, *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*. "We have found concrete evidence of at least eight plots involving the CIA to assassinate Fidel Castro from 1960 to 1965."

Critics, among them Arthur Schlesinger, dismissed the attempted assassinations as acts of a rogue executive agency, acting roguishly. It can be held that the CIA acted ineptly, but not that it acted on its own steam. Sen. Howard Baker years ago brought to my attention the recorded questioning of Richard Helms, then CIA chief, on whether Attorney General Robert Kennedy was aware of the attempts on the life of Castro. The answer was that Kennedy was aware (confirmed by Baker, by telephone, today). Based on the Church hearings, I wrote a novel in 1987 (*Mongoose R.I.P.*) describing the attempts on the charmed life of the dictator.

The Venezuelan vice president has asked for a more direct repudiation of Robertson by President Bush. In fact, lesser voices than the president's have done all the disavowing that needs to be done. For the president to throw yet another spear into the infidel suggests that another spear is needed, even though those who have eyes to see, and minds to use, know that Mr. Robertson is quite dead, needing no supplementary toxin.

Meanwhile, the memory of U.S. presidential complicity in assassination plots is very nearly dead. There have been no references, post the Robertson initiative, to the old "Special Group" that began to meet every Tuesday morning in 1962 in the White House Situation Room to discuss the end of Castro. McGeorge Bundy was the group's chairman. Bundy reported to the president "on the desirability of not spreading knowledge of covert operations any wider than absolutely necessary, if we are to preserve the principle of deniability."

Arthur Schlesinger captured priorities precisely, in a memorandum written in April 1961. "When lies must be told, they should be told by subordinate officials. At no point should the president be asked to lend himself to the cover operation. There seems to me merit in Secretary Rusk's suggestion that someone other than the president make the final decision and do so in his absence—someone whose head can later be placed on the block if things go terribly wrong."

One of Schlesinger's "failure options" was to put the blame on the CIA as "errant idealists and soldiers-of-fortune working on their own." We can safely assume that the CIA never even saw the Robertson broadcast.

Look What's Flying!

NEW YORK, AUGUST 30

THE story of the union striking against Northwest Airlines is very big, because buried in it is something that looks like a change in the intellectual soul of the nation. For generations it has been widely accepted that when one union goes on strike, members of other unions should express their corporate sympathy by refusing to cross the picket line. Restraints on collegial striking were here and there imposed by Congress and the courts. And it was the chief executive—President Reagan—who in 1981 fired the air traffic controllers who struck illegally.

But mostly the attitude has been that if a picket line is set up, all conscientious people are supposed to observe it, never mind any examination of the issues being fought over.

Three examples come to mind. The first involved Eleanor Roosevelt, who stopped short of entering a theater that was being picketed, announcing that she would not cross a picket line "under any circumstance." That statement gave rise to the nearest thing to the inescapably rationalist reply in modern polemics, which was a call for volunteers to picket round-the-clock all the exits from Hyde Park.

Next most arresting was the event featuring Professor John Kenneth Galbraith. It was in 1967 and Mr. Galbraith, freshly anointed as chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action, was bound for a studio for an interview on *Meet the Press*. But the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists had called a strike, and Mr. Galbraith refused to cross the picket line. Here was a champion of independent thought submitting to indiscriminate instructions with a kind of docility unknown outside of Carthusian life.

My favorite recollection features David Susskind, the great organizer of television forums. He was premiering a stunt. Gathered about a table at the center of which was a little Sony television set sitting on a lazy Susan, were a half dozen men of illustrious public station. They included Billy Rose, John Kenneth Galbraith, the comedian Dick Gregory, and the journalist, me, set to answer questions posed from Grand Central Station.

Mr. Susskind announced with a trace of embarrassment that when he called out the name of any one of us, the guest addressed had to rise quickly from his seat and occupy the seat of the guest seated opposite the Sony. You see, said Mr. Susskind, the union hadn't decided who had the authority to twiddle the Sony set to face the guest called upon. This meant that six public figures had to dance about the table at high speed playing musical chairs to oblige the union bureaucracy. Billy Rose could have put us on as an exhibit in the World's Fair.

What has happened in Minnesota is that other unions are simply not observing this picket line. There are pilots and flight attendants and baggage handlers and contractors who are quietly expressing themselves by declining to strike.

The management of Northwest is defending itself by taking on some of the jobs performed by the striking union. That kind of thing was attempted by AFTRA during its strike, to the amusement of audiences who found themselves listening to news on strike night not as told by Dan Rather or Mike Wallace, but as told by vice presidents yanked from their offices. In the sprightly observation of an editor of *Time*, that evening we were regaled with news of "Vest Nom," "Cheeze Juftif Warren," "cloddy skies," and "mosterly easterly winds."

Northwest executives can't fly their planes but they can reach out to unemployed mechanics, as they have done, finding hundreds who are willing to do the work necessary to keep Northwest flying. There was no alternative except to plead for bankruptcy. It is a growing sense of the need to cope with economic realities that we see here, displacing altar-boy deference to union strikes, merely because they are strikes by unions.

If Northwest prevails, it will have accomplished more merely than the continued flight of its airplanes.

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"You knew I was a piscivore when you married me!"

happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Rimbauds, Not Rambos

MOST of us are familiar with the subtle differences between even relatively compatible cultures. One notes, for example, that what's known to Americans as "The Hokey-Pokey" is called in Britain "The Hokey-Cokey." Just when you think you've figured out what it's all about, it turns out you haven't quite grasped all the nuances.

Accustomed as I am to these linguistic variations, I was nevertheless brought up short browsing the *Guardian* the other day and reading that Angela Merkel's election victory would make Germany "the 20th of the 25 EU nations with a centre-right government."

That's right: The EU—you know, the EU-nuchs, the Euro-weenies, the proverbial cheese-eating surrender monkeys, etc.—are four-fifths "center-right." Half a decade ago, they were all center-left Third Wayers. But having put its left foot in, Europe pulled its left foot out, stuck its right foot in, and shook it all about.

The *Guardian* is technically correct. At the moment, Europe is governed largely by politicians of "the right." Jacques Chirac, for example, is in French terms a "conservative." Granted, "conservative" is an elastic designation, and, in the hands of the media, it's usually shorthand for the side you're not meant to like. Thus, George W. Bush is "conservative," and so are unreconstructed Marxists in the Chinese politburo and the more hardline ayatollahs. But even under those expansive rules of admission, I find it difficult to encompass President Chirac within the definition. If he's "center-right," where the center is doesn't bear thinking about. Still, the fact remains that the transatlantic estrangement of the Bush era has occurred during a period of supposed political convergence between Washington and chancelleries of Europe—the end result of which is that the president's closest ally is the center-left survivor Tony Blair.

That's why I'm unpersuaded by those Europhiles in Washington who are pinning their hopes on a Euro-American realignment under Frau Merkel and France's Nicolas Sarkozy. The differences between Europe and America are so profound that political labels are simply lost in translation. You know those showers where the merest nudge of the dial turns the water from freezing to scalding? Mainstream European politics is the opposite of that. You can turn the dial all the way from "left" to "right" and it makes no difference.

Over the last half-century, Continental politics evolved to the point where almost any issue worth talking about was ruled beyond the bounds of polite society. Austria was the classic example: Year in, year out, whether you voted for the center-left party or the center-right party, you wound up with the same center-left/center-right coalition presiding over what was in essence a two-party one-party state. In France, M. Chirac isn't really "center-right" so much as ever so slightly left-of-right-of-left-of-center—and even that distinction applies only when he's standing next to his former prime minister, the right-of-left-of-right-of-left-of-center Lionel Jospin. Though supposedly from opposite ends of the political spectrum, in the 2002 presidential election they wound up running against each other on identical platforms, both passionately committed to high taxes, high unemployment, and high crime.

Americans often make the same criticism of their own system—the "Republicrats," etc.—but take it from me, the U.S. still has a more genuinely responsive politics with more ideological diversity than anywhere in western Europe. On the Continent, the Eurodee and Eurodum mainstream parties are boxed into a consensus politics that's no longer sustainable. The people are weary of certain aspects of this postwar settlement—

permanent double-digit unemployment and the Islamification of their cities—but they're not yet ready to give up the social programs, the short work weeks, long vacations, and jobs for life. They're voting against the center-left consensus but there's little sign they're willing to vote for any medicine tougher than a modest tweak toward a right-of-left-of-right-of-center consensus.

Remember Dominique de Villepin, the magnificently obstructionist big-haired French foreign minister in the run-up to the Iraq war? He's a poet—a veritable Rimbaud to Bush's Rambo. Well, he's prime minister now and, in his first big speech in the job, he was at pains to reassure French voters that the internal contradictions of a pampered lethargic welfare society could all be resolved through "Gallic genius":

"In a modern democracy, the debate is not between the liberal and the social, it is between immobilism and action. Solidarity and initiative, protection and daring: That is the French genius."

Oh-la-la! C'est magnifique, n'est-ce pas? All those elegant nouns just waiting for a stylishly coiffed French genius to steer the appropriate course between the Scylla of solidarity and the Charybdis of initiative, between protection and daring, immobilism and action, inertia and panic, stylish insouciance and meaningless gestures, abstract nouns and street riots, etc., etc. The French electorate was in the mood to

hear something about crime or jobs. But for a man of letters with a Byronic hairdo that's all too dreary and prosaic compared with an open-ended debate between solidarity and initiative stretching lazily into the future.

Tony Blankley's well-argued new book, *The West's Last Chance*, is among other things a heartfelt plea for the European political class to rouse itself before the canoe goes over the waterfall. I don't think they're ready to tell the voters and I don't think the voters are ready to hear it. They put their center-right foot in, they pull their center-left foot out. But they don't yet understand they're about to be shaken all about.

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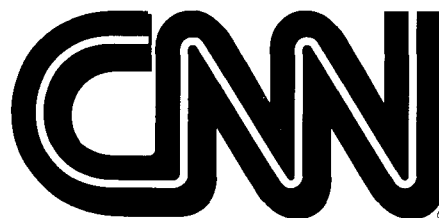


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